

2 CHRONICLE/NEWS

Meningitis kills 3,000 children

Chris McGreal in Kano

AT LEAST 3,000 children have died in a meningitis epidemic in northern Nigeria and doctors are struggling to contain the outbreak. More than a million children are being vaccinated in this city, where the outbreak is thought to have begun.

Some doctors fear the real death toll is much higher — a suspicion compounded by the military government's health minister, Inechukwu Madubuko, who last week said that meningitis had claimed up to 15,000 lives. He proposed imposing a state of emergency in Kano. However, Kano state's health minister, Nafisat Mohammed Kabir, claims the crisis is under control.

The international medical agency, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), the only aid agency working in Kano, is leading the emergency programme and has described the situation as critical. MSF says an appeal for foreign funds to immunise many more of the 20 million people thought to be at risk has so far fallen on deaf ears.

"This situation is really critical because the mass immunisation campaign has only just begun and only in the city," said MSF's medical coordinator, Dr Elizabeth Leach. "We are likely to see the deaths go on for at least another month before the infection rate declines."

Some of those who have contracted meningitis have been reluctant to seek treatment because of the high cost of prescribed drugs.

Kano's Infectious Diseases Hospital is treating about 100 new patients a day, despite its poor reputation. Until a few days ago it had just one doctor and the grounds were littered with spent needles and waste.

Spinal meningitis is highly contagious and is spread by a form of physical or respiratory contact, such as when an infected person sneezes on someone else.

The disease causes inflammation of the brain membranes and the spinal cord. It is characterised by a sudden onset of intense headaches, fever, vomiting and a stiff neck. It can cause coma or convulsions, and can be fatal if left untreated.

Doctors believe that the scale of the outbreak was compounded by an early start to the dry season — with its searing heat and winds carrying sand down from the Sahara, creating conditions in which meningitis thrives.

Dr John Mohammed, the Nigerian epidemiologist coordinating the government relief programme, said the outbreak was the worst in nearly 20 years and that it could have been prevented. "Had the vaccinations been undertaken before we would not have had this problem... I was requested in 1987 to draw up a comprehensive programme of vaccination. Why they are not doing it, I don't know," he said.

Kano state's health minister said regular immunisation would be introduced. But other doctors were privately critical of the pace of the federal government's response to the crisis, saying first indications of an epidemic were visible in January and the authorities failed to act.



Caroline Beale arrives with her lawyer Michael Dowd at the Maudsley hospital in south London, where she is receiving psychiatric care

Legal row rages as Caroline Beale returns to UK

San Katz in New York

ROBERT HANOPHY, the judge at the centre of the Caroline Beale controversy, has recently presided over a string of headline-grabbing cases.

In January he offered a glimpse of the rhetorical arsenal he directed at the British legal system this week as he added a life sentence to the 175 years that a New York serial killer was already serv-

ing for the murder of more than a dozen women. "In case there is such a thing as reincarnation," he told Joel Rifkin, "I want you to spend your second life in prison."

The 61-year-old judge also presided over the high-profile trial last September of a doctor who allowed a 33-year-old woman to bleed to death after botching a late-term abortion. The doctor became only the second in the country to be convicted of murder in a medical procedure and was sentenced to the maximum 25-years-to-life term.

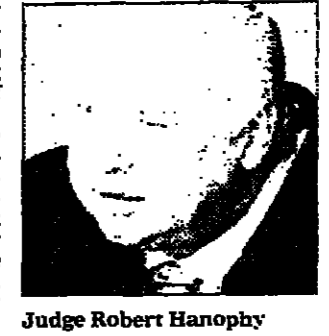
Judge Hanophy sits on the New York Supreme Court, the equivalent of a British crown court. Unlike most Supreme Court justices, he was not elected but appointed by the state governor. Appointed judges are generally considered to be of a higher calibre than elected ones because they tend to have been chosen on their merits, rather than through their connection to the city's political bosses.

Judge Hanophy's 36-year legal career appears to have been largely undramatic, however.

He has served as an acting New York State Supreme Court Justice since 1987 and sits in Queens, the largely residential New York borough where both the city's airports are located. Records show he has never "received public censure".

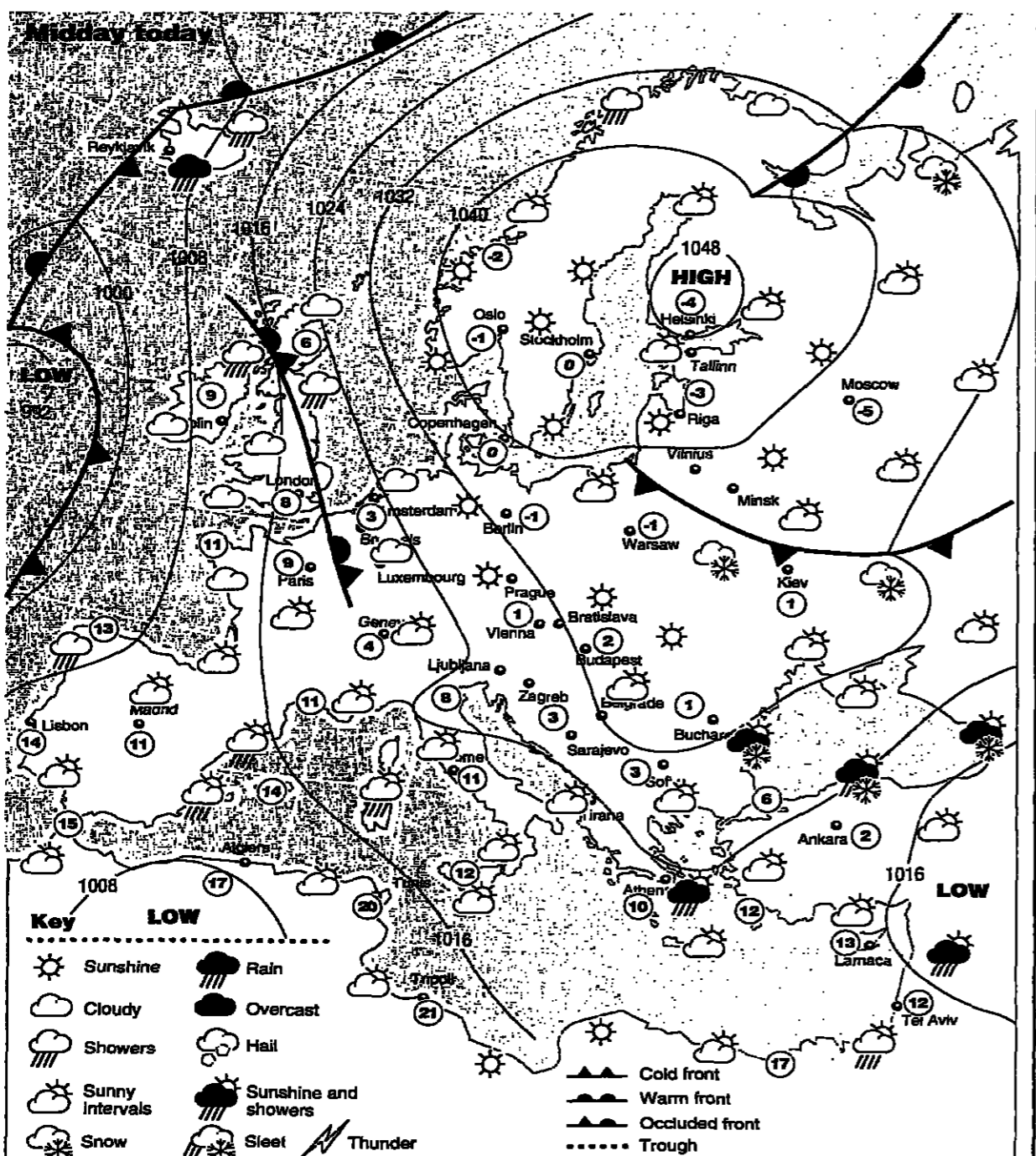
Alan Rothstein, counsel for the New York bar association, said he could not recall any judge launching a similar attack on a foreign legal system. "Judges are allowed to comment on issues affecting the administration of justice."

New York judges are more often in the headlines criticising the city's own underfunded and overstretched judicial system. In a new book Judge Hanophy's fellow New York Supreme Court Justice Harold Rothman, co-edited a system which "increasingly... resembles a lottery".



Judge Robert Hanophy

The weather in Europe



Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

8.55am News Weather 8.55pm Top Gear 9.15pm The Simpsons 9.30pm The Simpsons 10.15pm The Simpsons 10.45pm The Simpsons 11.15pm The Simpsons

BBC 2

7.00am Open University: Landscape Mechanisms 7.25am Mids 7.50pm Working With Systems 8.15pm East Meets West: Action Films: Western Culture 8.40pm Mags: Earth 9.05pm Poetry Language And History 9.30pm Lorraine: What Was Moomin? 9.55pm Understanding Music: A Change Of Key? 10.00pm Going to School in Japan 10.15pm The Simpsons 10.45pm The Simpsons 11.15pm The Simpsons 11.45pm The Simpsons

BBC Prime

6.00am BBC World News 6.30pm Foreign Correspondent 7.00pm The Simpsons 7.30pm The Simpsons 8.00pm The Simpsons 8.30pm The Simpsons 9.00pm The Simpsons 9.30pm The Simpsons 10.00pm The Simpsons 10.30pm The Simpsons 11.00pm The Simpsons

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

7.50am Match of the Day — The Road To Wembley 8.30pm News 9.00pm News 9.30pm News 10.00pm News 10.30pm News 11.00pm News

BBC 2

7.15am Open University: Pure Maths 10.10am Australian Grand Prix 10.30pm Top Gear 10.45pm The Simpsons 11.15pm The Simpsons

BBC Prime

6.00am BBC World News 6.30pm Foreign Correspondent 7.00pm The Simpsons 7.30pm The Simpsons 8.00pm The Simpsons 8.30pm The Simpsons 9.00pm The Simpsons 9.30pm The Simpsons 10.00pm The Simpsons 10.30pm The Simpsons 11.00pm The Simpsons

European weather outlook

Scandinavia

An intense area of high pressure is centred over Finland. That means most places will remain dry today with plenty of sunshine, but it will be cold with severe frosts early and late. Max temp +3 to +6.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland

An area of high pressure, centred over Finland, controls the weather. A few light snow showers are possible over eastern Austria but most regions will be fine and cold with sunny spells by day and sharp night frosts. Max temp 0-5C.

France

A ridge of high pressure extends from an anticyclone over Finland and should ensure all areas stay fine today with patchy cloud and sunshine at times, but it will again be cold in eastern France. Max temp 5-10C from east to west, perhaps 12C on the Mediterranean coast.

Spain and Portugal

A cold front will push cloud and heavy rain across Portugal and western Spain today, especially this afternoon. Meanwhile southern Spain will have a mix of bright spells and showers, but north-west Spain should stay dry and bright. Max temp 10-15C.

Italy

A good deal of dry weather today with the best of the sunshine in northern Italy. Southern and central regions will have a plenty of cloud and an outside chance of catching one or two sharp showers. Max temp 7-11C from north to south, but watch out for severe night frosts in the north.

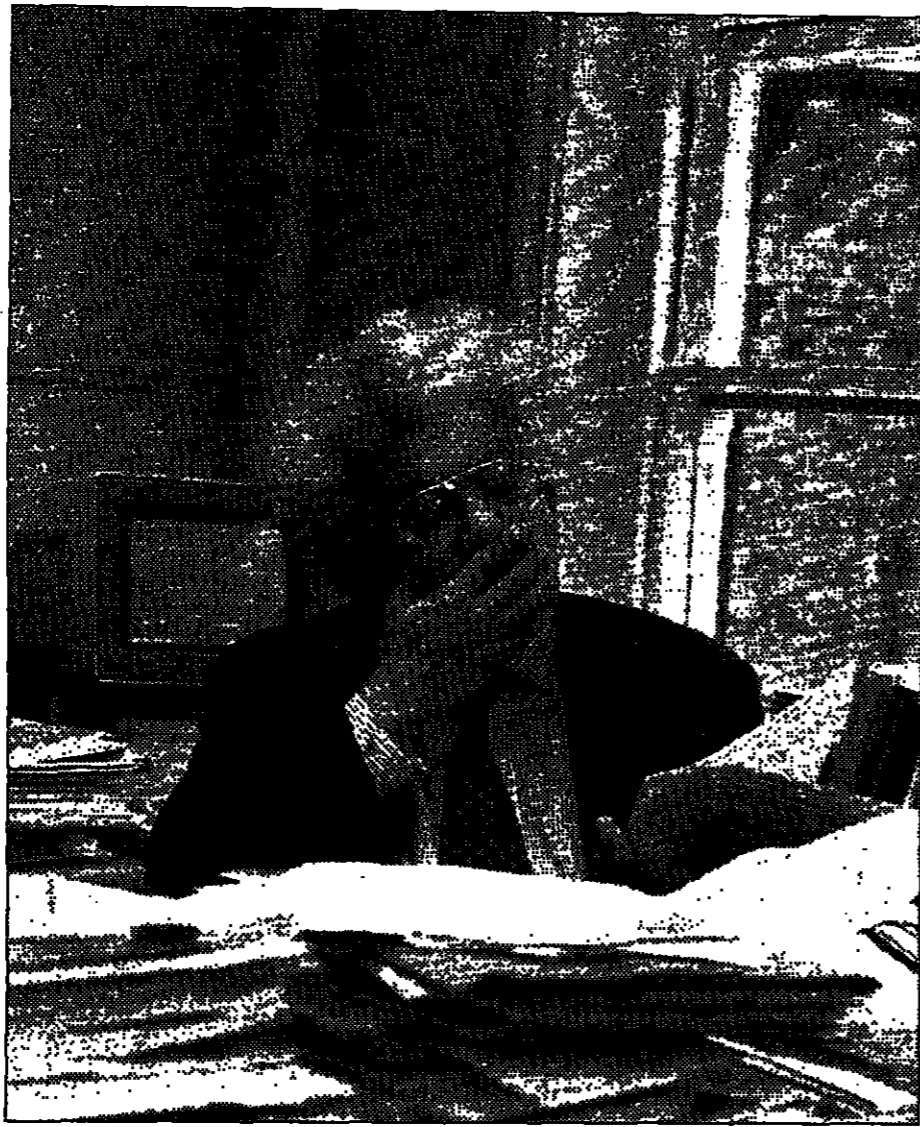
Greece

Mostly dry with sunny spells and just the odd morning shower. Still a cold north-easterly wind. Max temp 7-11C.

Camper

'Come election time, the economy may not be the strong card that Labour thought it would be. Indeed, it may be the one thing that will help the Tories to claw back some of the lead in the opinion polls. It would be foolish to count on the economy helping Labour. The election is not won yet. There is a long way to go'

- Lord Desai (right) former Labour economy spokesman



Feeling good or feeling bad?

The Government and the Opposition have different views on the state of the economy, with both cases backed up by an array of statistics and league tables. Here are the views on the six main areas of the economic battleground.

Table with 2 columns: Conservative and Labour. Rows include Jobs, Inflation, Interest rates, Investment, Growth, and Living standards. Each row contains a brief summary of the economic indicator for each party.

' Hamas charity' funds frozen

Richard Norton-Taylor and Ian Black

THE Charity Commissioners last night froze the assets of a London-based Palestinian fundraising organisation amid suspicions that its cash is being channelled to supporters of Hamas, the extremist group which has claimed responsibility for recent suicide bombs in Israel.

'Bumper year' spells poll gloom for Labour

Most economists back Clarke's forecast of strong growth, low inflation and higher prosperity in 1996, reports Larry Elliott

THE Chancellor's claims that 1996 is set to be a "bumper year" for the economy were backed by economists yesterday, with most seeing a move towards above-trend growth and higher consumer confidence.

shared by at least one eminent opposition figure. Lord Desai, who was a frontbench opposition spokesman in the Lords before being fired for making "unhelpful" comments about tax, has added to Labour's unease by saying his party may be well advised to avoid the economy as an election issue.

1991 have seen their tax-free investments mature. On top of that, the small tax cuts in the Budget come into effect in April, boosting consumption and helping to wipe out the memories of the huge tax increases in 1993 and 1994.

Third, there has been little sign so far that job insecurity — the prime cause of the "feelbad factor" — is being alleviated. Indeed, reports that the Government is planning to remove employment rights from workers in small businesses is hardly the way to improve matters.



RUTH LEA, head of Institute of Directors policy unit: "The economy is as flat as a pancake and the interest rate looks quite appropriate. Disposable incomes will be affected by tax cuts, Tessa and the electricity rebate, and part of this will be spent. But there are still problems with the weak economy. The US may pick up but Germany is flat on its back. Overall, we think things will pick up but it won't be that marvellous."



PROF TIM CONGDON, one of the Chancellor's wise men: "The next year will be pretty good. There will be a move towards above-trend growth (ie higher than 2.5 per cent) later this year and inflation will be moderate. By early 1997, I see good growth, unemployment at the lowest in Europe, house prices moving up and rising consumption. It will only be later that inflation will start to go up as a result of the economy overheating."



MARIAN BELL, economist with the Royal Bank of Scotland and one of the Guardian's panel of wise women: "The economy is picking up nicely. My view is that it is picking up rather too nicely, but inflation won't come back to haunt us until after the election. I don't think the consumer is going to be crying about inflation of 3 per cent. If he's in debt or had negative equity, he'll probably be quite pleased."



DAN CORRY, chief economist at left-leaning Institute for Public Policy Research: "I think Desai is massively overstating it. I don't think it's clear that everything is going fine. There will be a bounce back in the second half of 1996 but it will be due to consumption. Where is the investment? I also disagree that there will inevitably be a return of the feelgood factor, though consumer confidence will pick up from very low levels."

Big lenders cut mortgage rates

Margaret Hughes Personal Finance Editor

HOMEBUYERS will be celebrating cheaper mortgages this weekend as major lenders cut their home loan rates in line with the lowering of bank base rates. But there is still doubt whether the 0.25 per cent cut — the fourth in six months — will be enough to encourage first time buyers to get a foot on the housing ladder.

Mortgage comparisons

Table showing mortgage comparisons for different loan sizes and repayment methods. Columns include Loan size, Jan 1995 rate, and Latest monthly saving.

Britain's biggest lender, the Halifax Building Society, led the way — cutting its mortgage rate by 0.24 per cent to 7.35 per cent, effective immediately for new borrowers and from April for existing borrowers. This will reduce monthly payments for homebuyers with an average £50,000 repayment mortgage by just over £9, making their monthly outgoings almost £22 less than at the beginning of last year.

than a year. However, the early months of the past two years have similarly shown signs of recovery which has not been sustained. Garry Marsh, head of group corporate affairs at the Halifax, attributes these earlier reversals to tax increases which cut into pay packets at the beginning of each financial year. He is more optimistic that this year's upturn will be sustained as the tax cuts announced in November's Budget start to boost consumer spending power early next month.

Ah, the western planners would say, but think of the squalor, the confusion, the jam-packed traffic of cars, buses, bicycles, donkeys, herds of goats — street vendors, impertinenturchins, jolly smiling women, wandering mendicants — the rubbish, the crumbling walls, the piles of onions by the Bab Futuh! Jan Morris in Cairo

Outlook page 19



IN MR. BILL EDWARDS' POSITION, it isn't improper to spit.

As a taster for Jack Daniel Distillery, he'll sample a lot of whiskey in a day. But Bill never swallows a drop. He'll roll the whiskey around in his mouth, tasting it for smoothness and maturity. And when he retires it to a spittoon, there's no sense of impropriety. Around here, everyone knows if we didn't have people spending their days spittin', we wouldn't have a whiskey so highly valued for sippin'.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

4 BRITAIN

Castle Howard host to a windy debate

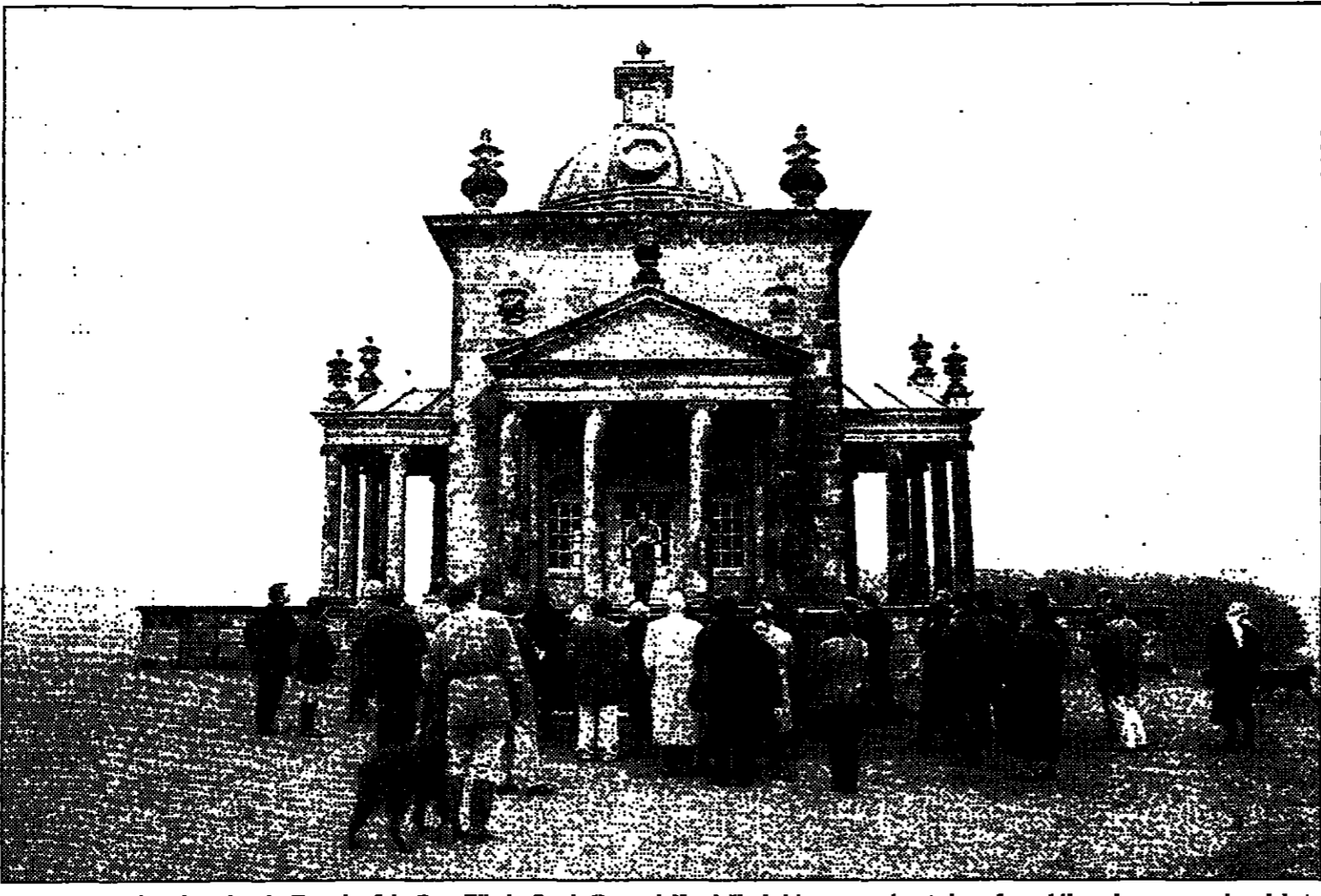
Martin Wainwright ponders a question

ASMALL crowd gathered on a freezing North Yorkshire hilltop yesterday to hear four philosophers attempt to answer the question: What is Question?

Each academic took up a symbolic position at a doorway of the palladian Temple of the Four Winds, Castle Howard, as the mansion's squire and his red setters looked on benignly. "They'll feel it when they go round the North Wind corner," said Simon Howard, summarising the dogs to hear William Charlton of Edinburgh University in full flow.

"We have plenty of odd events at Castle Howard, but this must be one of the most peculiar to date."

The stylised dispute was organised by the Henry Moore Foundation, and the gnomonic question was posed by the American artist and philosopher James Lee Byars, whose talking golden globe, Monument to



Philosophy buffs gathered at the Temple of the Four Winds, Castle Howard, North Yorkshire, yesterday, to hear four philosophers engage in a debate

Language, is on show at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds.

"A little louder please, Sean," the institute's director Robert Hopper had told the globe yesterday morning, getting a muffled reply from inside.

Assistant curator Sean Pickard spent the day curled up inside the three-metre sphere, reciting extracts from W.B. Yeats to

visitors admitted three at a time.

Then the coach to Castle Howard was at the door and the lessons of the globe — "a gap opening onto a limitless world," according to the French philosopher Jean-Michel Ribettes (representing the East Wind) — were transferred to the Yorkshire countryside.

Mr Ribettes, in the coldest of all Vanbrugh's four

porches, alarmed the more

writing members of the crowd by fishing out at least four closely typed pages of argument.

His answer to the question was a psalm of praise for Byars, an artist whose sense of humour was fortunately shared by his parents.

His first exhibition, at age 23, consisted of "large stone spheres in a vigor-

ously empty space in his

parents' home in Detroit, with all the windows, doors and furniture removed from the house."

"The Howard setters promptly started to behave fretfully, pleading for another run, and the four philosophers set off at a brisk pace back to the mansion for a post-debate tea.

"I'm not sure they know where it is; they're going

the wrong way," said Mr

Howard, with gentlemanly concern.

"Don't worry," said Mr Hopper, as the quartet vanished over Vanbrugh's and Hawksmoor's carefully planned horizon. "They'll just argue their way there linguistically. The rest of us can carry on pondering the question and thinking about a thoroughly memorable day."

Court backs Dorrell on drug ban

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

AHIGH Court judge yesterday upheld the Government's decision to stop doctors prescribing the pain-killing capsule form of the sleeping drug Temazepam on the NHS, in the wake of "devastating" injuries to drug abusers who melted down and injected the contents.

RP Sherer Ltd, sole manufacturers of the capsule in the UK, had challenged the decision of Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, to add it to the list of drugs which doctors are prohibited from prescribing on the NHS.

The company, which stands to lose £3 million a year, had argued the list's purpose was to oblige GPs to prescribe cheaper, generic forms of drugs, and Mr Dorrell had no power to include Temazepam just because a small number of addicts abused it.

But Mr Justice Judge said the ban, which came into force in January, was a "permissible exercise" of the Health Secretary's powers to protect public health. Drug takers had melted down and injected the contents of the capsules with devastating consequences, including amputation of limbs and death.

The ban, which does not cover private prescriptions, had been applied after the Department of Health conducted full and fair inquiries, and a formidable body of informa-

tion had been gathered in consultations with clinicians and experts on drug abuse, said the judge.

Scherer had warned if the capsules were banned, the tablet or elixir forms of the drug would be abused instead. But the judge said government medical investigators had concluded addicts would not resort to the tablets or elixir because they did not provide the same euphoric "hit".

If they were abused, the Health Secretary might have to make an addition to the list of NHS prohibited drugs. Michael Beloff, QC, for Scherer, had argued that Mr Dorrell had made a novel and "ad hoc" use of the list. The health department had concocted the list's original purpose was to contain costs and that there was no precedent for placing a drug on it on public health and safety grounds.

Mr Beloff said when the list was used on an ad hoc basis there were no statutory safeguards for pharmaceutical companies like Scherer, which faced "grievous losses" if products were banned.

The judge said Mr Dorrell had been entitled to use his powers of prohibition on the grounds of public health and safety. He also rejected accusations the ban contravened European law and was procedurally unfair.

He gave Scherer leave to appeal against his ruling on the ground that it raised a matter of public importance.

Heseltine tells deficit city not to expect help

MICHAEL Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, last night made it clear that Liverpool could not expect the Government to bail it out of its latest financial crisis.

The city council's problems showed that the Labour Party had not changed since he visited Liverpool in the Militant-dominated days of the early 1980s.

The city council, with Britain's biggest council tax, faces the prospect of cutting up to 1,000 jobs tomorrow in an effort to bridge a £44 million budget deficit before the midnight deadline.

Mr Heseltine insisted during a visit to the city last night: "Liverpool has to live within the same constraints as everyone else."

Its problems were not all down to the Government, as both unions and councillors in the city had been claiming. "A large number of people in Liverpool are now playing their part but it is the bad examples that get the headlines. It was exactly the same when I first came here in the early 1980s."

"My message to the council is: you've shown that you can win in competition to bring jobs to this city and improvements to this city — but only if the economic climate is right. That means you have to have the same constraints as any government would insist on."

Tony Blair, the Labour

leader, would also insist on tight financial management. Mr Heseltine said. "There is no escape from that, nobody can buck the system."

The formulas used to decide how central government distributed money were fair, he said. "This city has probably gained as much as any city in the UK from the help this Conservative government has brought here."

He added: "A lot of other councils with similar sorts of problems manage extremely well. One is forced to the conclusion that there must be something particular about Liverpool that causes the trouble."



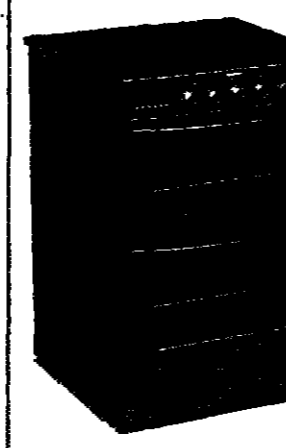
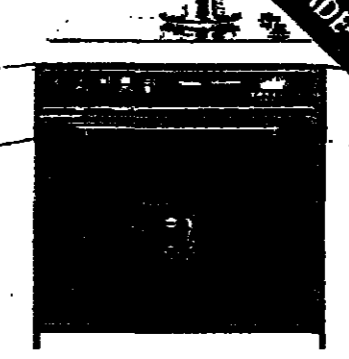
Mr Heseltine said he had worked closely with Labour council leader Harry Rimmer. "He has shown in many cases great courage in trying to bring sanity to this local authority, but has seen the sort of problems he is up against with the Labour Party."

Up to 6,000 local government jobs will be lost in the next financial year as county and metropolitan councils struggle to accommodate budget shortfalls of £500 million, the Local Government Chronicle said yesterday.

The magazine said at least 5,300 jobs would go across the board, and the figure could rise above 6,000 if Liverpool went ahead with proposed cuts. Birmingham city council would be the hardest hit, with 727 jobs estimated to go.

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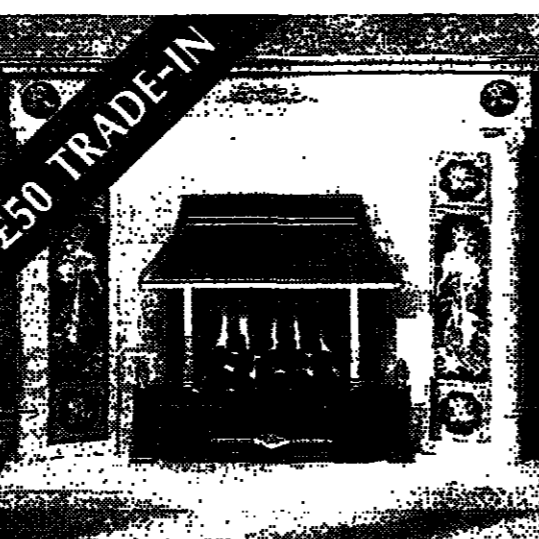
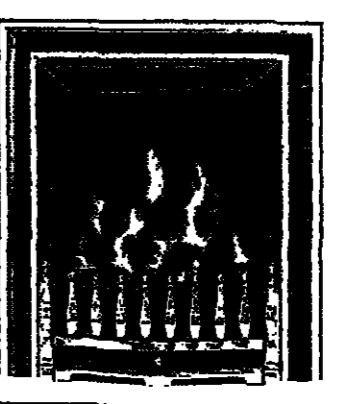
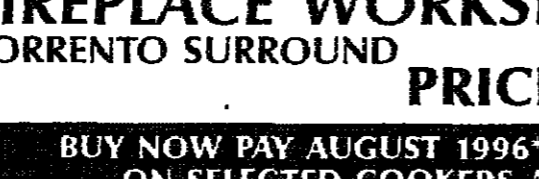

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'The treetop phase ends with a man giving a farewell rendition of Amazing Grace on his Spanish bagpipes, while a backing group of six bulldozers churned the earth around him'

Gary Young on the battle of Newbury



Felling has been completed on 77 of the 382 acres needed for the Newbury bypass, and 47 acres have been completely cleared PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

Road protesters brought down to earth

BY midday yesterday all but a couple of the treetop protesters at the Snelmore site in Newbury had been brought down to earth with a bang — some with the help of the balliffs' clippers.

One man was allowed to play a farewell rendition of Amazing Grace on his Spanish bagpipes while a backing group comprising six bulldozers churned the earth around him.

How many more surreal sights the Battle of Newbury will offer depends on whose foot soldiers you are prepared to believe. In bald figures, the bulldozers need to clear 382.45 acres, according to the Newbury Weekly News, which publishes a regular update on progress. Of that, tree felling has been completed on 77.58 acres (21.3 per cent) and 47.49 acres (13.1 per cent) have been completely cleared and are now ready for building.

"They've clearly made a start but the whole conflict is far from over," said a reporter on the newspaper.

A spokeswoman for the Highways Agency, which is responsible for building the bypass, divides the initial building contract into two stages which provides slightly more cheerful statistics for the builders. Stage one involves felling trees and shrubs and is about half completed. Stage two demands the clearing of all timber in preparation for building and is only a third of that finished she says.

But the builders are already two thirds of the way through their contract, which means that whoever's statistics one takes, the protesters have already indicated a considerable dent in the original timetable.

"Of course the protesters have made a difference but

the road is to be built over 2 1/2 years so a month here or there can be made up later," she said.

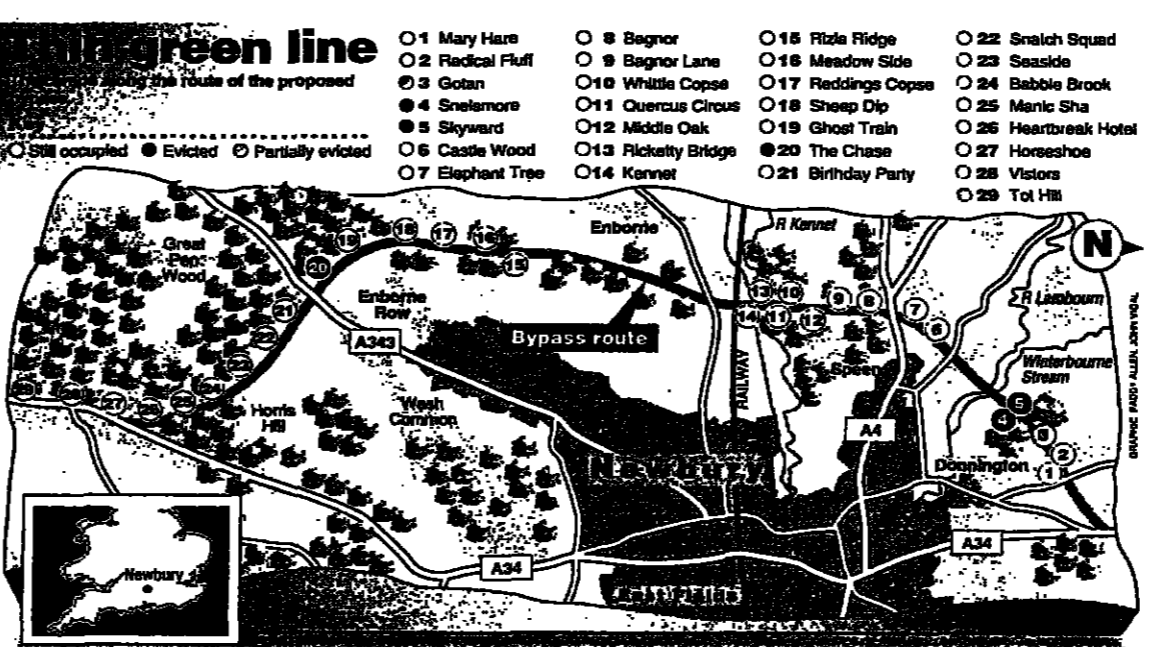
The agency is however racing against the environment's clock, around the end of the month the nesting season begins and they will need official permission to chop down some trees.

The protesters are well aware of this and are hoping that if they can hold up tree felling long enough, nature will take its course and disrupt the timetable even further. It is doubtful, however, that the season will have anything but a minimal effect on construction work.

Unlike the agency, the environmentalists talk in phases rather than stages. They say they are currently embroiled in the second phase of their campaign, in which they are opposing evictions by camping in the trees. They say they are not even half way through phase two yet with more than 20 tree camps still to be removed. Behind them is phase one which was the initial occupation of site and ahead lies phase three — the "ground defence". A spokesman said the principal battles in the next phase would take place around Tot Hill and Penn Wood which he promised would be defended tenaciously.

"This is just the beginning. We will defend the very last tree and then every last patch of ground. People would not have got involved with us must dedication if they didn't think we could stop the road being built."

● The Highways Agency yesterday claimed that only one specialist climber, not three, had defected to the protesters. Paul Linton, who was said to have defected on Thursday, yesterday confirmed he was still working for the balliffs.



First man of the woods moved on in search of peace as protest grew

BADGER, a former woodworker and now a man of the woods, set up the first Newbury protest camp, writes John Vidal.

He bent his hazel branches, covered them with plastic and lived alone in the Snelmore oak woods from August 1994. Within a year he had been joined by so many people that he moved "down the road" to set up Granny Ash camp in search of peace and quiet.

By late summer 1995, six large camps had been established — at Snelmore, Granny Ash, Bagnor, Kennet, Reddings Copse and The Chase and Tot Hill. Most were ground camps

crude, but efficient "benders" which are watertight and quick to erect.

Some benders had mod cons like pallet floors, others were little more sophisticated than the refugee "blinds", found in disaster areas. All camps revolve around a fire and cooking/living tent.

The mushrooming of tree houses began in mid-January after the bypass work started in one of the coldest winters on record. A national "phone tree" attracted more than 200 people to Newbury. Many were skilled woodcraftsmen from previous road and open cast coalmine pro-

tests in Lancashire, Wales, and the West Country.

Within weeks there were dozens of new camps, often only a few hundred yards apart. The strongest is The Isle of Kennet Free Independent State where protesters have made an island by linking the River Kennet with Kennet and Avon canal. The "mother ship" tree house, which is stretched between more than six trees, can sleep 12 people. There are 10 other fortified houses, all linked by aerial ropewalks.

The hardest tree to clear will be the 150ft Corsican Pine at Reddings Copse, which may need a helicop-

ter to remove people locked onto a ladder which rises 15ft over its top.

As the big camps are cleared, newer ones like Ricketty Bridge — also on an island — are growing, and every available tree is being squatted in the camps that are left. In the past few weeks, Radical Fluff, Rizia Ridge, Ghost Train, Manic Sha and Quercus Circus camps have been set up.

There are thought to be 32 but some are little more than a tree or two. Others are growing rapidly.

Local people have been helping the protesters fortify their camps at weekends.

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Strike hits Kew in show of discontented flower power

Owen Bowcott on the pay dispute leading to gardens' first stoppage in 200 years

BOTANIC horticulturists at Kew Gardens yesterday walked out of their tropical hot-houses to stage their first strike, in protest at a pay offer amounting to £65 a year.

Where the demented George III once talked to the trees, the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens claim they are being driven to distraction by the royal garden's GMB union placards, nearly 100 picketed the entrances and asked visitors to boycott the site.

The dispute, growing steadily since last July, has been aggravated by the fact that the gardening world has never been highly paid. Du-swa Hayes, a higher botanical horticulturist who has been at Kew, west London, for 10 years, said she earns £9,500 for a 39 hour week.

"This is the middle of our Orchid Festival and I'm a specialist orchid grower. I should be looking after the orchid nursery, which gives me a lot of job satisfaction," she said. "But these wages can't pay the bills."

A private royal garden since the 18th century, Kew was a refuge for George III during his periodic bouts of madness.

Paul Maloney, a GMB regional official, said: "This is the first time in more than 200 years of history that there has been industrial action taken by staff. They are extremely low paid. These people are not mowing the lawns. They are all highly qualified botanic horticulturists."

The dispute centres on a performance-related pay offer last July, which Kew's management claims averaged 6.5 per cent. Everyone was promised a 0.5 per cent increase for inflation, but some staff received no performance-related element and their annual increase amounted to around 5%.

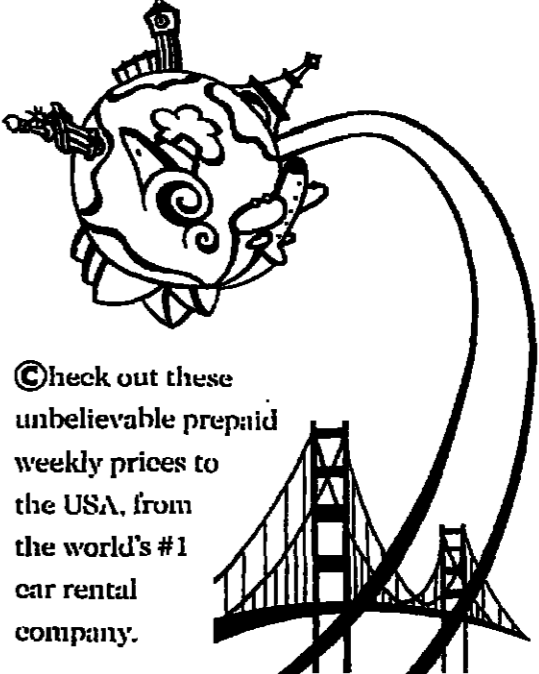
The GMB, which claims 82 out of 125 horticulture staff at the gardens, has threatened further industrial action if there are no fresh talks. John Lavin, operations manager at Kew, yesterday insisted the performance-related pay scheme had been agreed with the unions three years ago.

"Horticultural pay in the country as a whole is pretty low," he conceded. "For that reason we moved staff off civil service grades which formerly equated them with industrial workers or ordinary gardeners. Only a very few people have not received performance related pay."

Kew is run by a board of trustees, but its main subsidy of £15.5 million this year comes from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Treasury cuts had not been severe, Mr Lavin said. "We like to be first in a lot of things, but this is our first strike — it's regrettable and disappointing."

Among recent achievements was the production of the world's largest water lily which reached a diameter of 81.7in. Such successes are not reflected in their performance-related pay packets, argues Dave Barnes, a GMB shop steward. "We are not asking for much, just a reasonable wage."

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Outlook page 15

6 WORLD NEWS

Middle East peace dominates ministers' meeting

EU seeks to calm relations with US

John Palmer in Brussels

EUROPEAN Union foreign ministers meet in Palermo today hoping to heal a widening rift with the United States over proposed new US sanctions against Cuba and the threatened Middle East peace process. Divisions on Cuba and on whether to isolate Iran internationally for its alleged support of Middle East terrorism are reawakening the transatlantic tensions which surfaced last year over policy in Bosnia.

The EU has warned the Clinton administration that the Cuban dispute could escalate into a full-scale legal and political confrontation between the allies in the World Trade Organisation. Theists already concern at the growing list of foreign trade disputes — including the European ban on beef hormones — which already divide the EU and the US.

The informal meeting of foreign ministers called by Italy (which holds the rotating EU presidency) will be dominated by the threat to the Middle East peace process. The EU is anxious to hammer out an agreed line before the hastily convened international summit in Egypt next Wednesday to discuss how to combat global terrorism.

Elderly Germans fight for 'death strip' land rights

Speculators could make a killing just east of the Berlin wall. Ian Traynor reports

SWEPT by the vagaries of war and cold war, the east Berlin strip (now Russian, to Silesia (now Polish), Berlin and then Vienna, Charlotte Hildebrandt is now back in Berlin fighting what is likely to be her last battle. Supported by two walk-in flats she stands, a widow of 87, on wasteland in the centre of the German capital and surveys the rubble-strewn ground.

It introduced a bill giving them the right to buy back the land at a quarter of its current value. Last week the upper house vetoed the bill and the claims have now gone to a mediation committee. About 1,000 Berliners, mostly elderly, are fighting to get their land back. Most have spread the offer of a cut-price deal.

along the wall was classified as state property. "Wall property" was exempted from 1990 legislation which provided for the restitution of land expropriated by East Germany. According to Dieter Blumwitz, a professor of international law at Würzburg University, the land never legally belonged to East Germany. For Bonn to claim that it did was tantamount to denying the four-week jurisdiction over cold-war Berlin, a foundation of the post-war order.



Battleground... Civilians pass a Russian military checkpoint after fierce fighting in the Chechen capital Grozny

Chechens exploit Moscow's disarray

James Meek in Moscow

THE strength, discipline and motivation of the Chechen armed force which occupied large areas of Grozny this week might have been expected to force the Kremlin finally to accept that it is at war with a determined nationalist group, not a small band of crazed bandits.

Gunfire echoes round city centre

GUNFIRE intensified last night in Grozny where Russian troops mounted "search and destroy" missions against rebel fighters who attacked and occupied parts of the city.

local people said was a fire at an oil dump south of the city. Sniper and automatic gunfire and powerful blasts echoed across the city centre, 500 yards from the Moscow-backed government's headquarters. — Reuter.

Most of the territory is not in any sense occupied by Russian forces. Federal troops huddle in isolated lowland dugouts longing to go home. Increasingly, the job of protecting government buildings and vital installations, like the pipeline which will carry oil from the Caspian oilfields, is being handed over to Chechen paramilitary units. They are supposedly loyal to Moscow but susceptible to personal and cultural pressure from within the community.

These local loyalists bore the brunt of the first wave of rebel attacks on Grozny this week. Officials denied persistent rumours that some had gone over to the rebel side. Federal forces have reacted with casual, apparently hapazard brutality against communities where the rebel presence is considered particularly brazen.

World news in brief

Hijackers seize Turkish Cypriot airliner

A HIJACKED Turkish Cypriot airliner with more than 100 people on board landed last night in the Bulgarian capital Sofia, as hijackers' chosen destination, writes Chris Nuttall in Ankara.

The hijackers' identity was not known. A spokesman for the airline, Umik Uku, told Turkish television that the Boeing 737 was seized an hour after it took off from Ercan airport in northern Cyprus en route for Istanbul.

ans, Turks and tourists from the United States, Japan, Belgium, France and Denmark. The Turkish Cypriot news agency, T.K.A, said there were 102 passengers and nine crew. Turkey occupied the northern half of the island in 1974. The Turkish Cypriots declared an independent state in 1984.

Chile protests to Britain

Chile has protested to Britain about the arrest of a Chilean trawler fishing near the Georgia Islands, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Arrest warrant

The Yugoslav war crimes tribunal issued an international arrest warrant yesterday against the Croatian Serb leader, Milan Martić, for allegedly ordering terrorist attacks on central Zagreb with cluster bombs last May.

Extradition move

Switzerland is likely to hand over to the UN war crimes tribunal Alfred Musema-Urwimana, a former Rwandan tea factory director accused of involvement in the massacre of thousands of Tutsis. — AP.

Liberia clashes

Heavy fighting broke out in Kakata, central Liberia, trapping 11 United Nations military observers, a UN official said. — Reuter.

Hamas man held

Palestinian police, under Israeli pressure to crack down on Islamic militants, have detained Mahmoud al-Zahar, a leader of the Hamas movement, his family said yesterday. — Reuter.

Haiti's police revive fears

POLICE in Haiti, hunting for gangsters who nearly killed a fellow officer, went on the rampage in the capital Port au Prince, bursting into shops and shooting on sight, witnesses said. At least 11 people were killed, most shot at point-blank range.

Amnesty's woman of conscience



AMNESTY International's prisoner of conscience for International Women's Day yesterday is Kelthoun Ahmed Lakdi Ouanat (left), a 24-year-old from the Western Sahara, who has been held in a Moroccan military prison since October 1992, writes Victoria Brittain.

Extradition move

After 10 months of hearings, torture and sexual abuse, she was jailed for 20 years after a trial in camera for threatening the state's external security. She rejected her statement admitting the charge, saying she had signed it under torture. No other evidence was brought against her.

Liberia clashes

Heavy fighting broke out in Kakata, central Liberia, trapping 11 United Nations military observers, a UN official said. — Reuter.

Hamas man held

Palestinian police, under Israeli pressure to crack down on Islamic militants, have detained Mahmoud al-Zahar, a leader of the Hamas movement, his family said yesterday. — Reuter.

Amnesty request

An apartheid era assassin, Dirk Coetzee, said yesterday he had applied to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town for amnesty for 27 crimes, including six murders. — Reuter.

Stalinists jailed

A Warsaw court yesterday jailed 12 Stalin-era political policemen, convicting them of beatings and torture after an unprecedented 38-month trial. They were investigation officers of the ministry of public security involved in crushing opposition to the communist takeover after the second world war. — Reuter.

Ankara and Baghdad sign deal to reopen oil pipeline

TURKEY and Iraq signed an agreement yesterday to reopen an oil pipeline closed by United Nations sanctions since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, writes Chris Nuttall in Ankara.

Ankara and Baghdad sign deal to reopen oil pipeline

the exported oil through Turkey," he said. He has been in Turkey all week and officials here hope his visit will mark the renewal of trade relations between the two countries.

They arranged his safe passage, with a technical team, through Kurdish-held northern Iraq. Both sides pronounced the pipeline in good shape after more than five years of disuse. It links the Kirkuk field to the Yumurtalik terminal on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

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When the monks who lived at Bury St. Edmunds abbey in the 13th century were allowed to speak (which wasn't very often), Latin was the holy order of the day. Indeed, for a young novice entering the monastery, it was a sine qua non. Fortunately, he would have found it far easier to get his tongue round the eight pints of the Abbot's Ale he was allowed in the evening. The ale was brewed in the monastery with natural spring water drawn from its own well. Today we're still drawing water from the same source for our own Abbot Ale. And while most other beers are fermented for just three or four days, Abbot is fermented slowly for a full seven ('Blessed by the Sabbath') to give it a rich, deep flavour. Many have declared it to be one of the finest real ales around. And even, on occasions, the ne plus ultra.

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8 SPORTS NEWS

Racing

Quiet man of Clare a big noise in the Cheltenham Gold Cup

Michael Walker on Tom Costello, the Irish farmer who has set up a production line for champion National Hunt horses

Midnight Court, the 1979, the 1987, the 1992. Three different horses, three different trainers, three different jockeys, but two common factors... Vincent O'Brien on the flat...

through their hands, did. The knowledge is being passed on as is the self-effacement... "He does things differently," said Dreaper... "They are both good horses," said Costello...



Golden touch... Tom Costello, guru of horseflesh

That could also be said of Costello and next week of the quiet man of Clare, Michael Walker... "They are both good horses," said Costello...

Ron Cox

Big race success has eluded the once-famous stable in recent years, but it could be more like old times for the Purblood team at Sandown today with Amancio in the Sunderland Imperial Cup... Amancio (4.05) may be Ten-

Jodami waits for National

nessee King, who ran well for a long way over two and a half miles at Haydock on his reappearance... Peter Beaumont, the 11-year-old's trainer, said "It's very disappointing but it's not quite right... We haven't had any more of this virus..."

JODAMI, winner of the 1993 Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup, will miss this year's race next Thursday because of a bacterial infection... He has won the National and Aintree on March 30...

Sandown with form for the televised events

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.35 The Major General, 2.30 Lord Drocot, 3.35 Lord Almarae, 4.40 Black Willow, 5.15 Harrisons Lamp.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 4.05 SUNDERLAND IMPERIAL CUP HANDICAP HURDLE, 5.01 1122P SKEGHO HILL, 5.05 12-10 WAIN SPILL, 5.09 25-101 KINGFISH PRY (4) (3) 101-2, 5.12 121 SLYNDEN GROUND, 5.16 25-200 AMANCIO, 5.20 1850N KING OF CROSS (2) (1) 185-0, 5.24 202-2 TERNWOOD, 5.28 625-1 HOLY WARRIDOR (3) (1) 70-0.

Chepstow with TV form

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.00 Marlboro's Air, 1.30 Sistar Stephanie, 2.00 AMBLESIDE, 2.50 Southdowns, 3.00 Greenwages, 3.25 Belle Live (m).

Southwell (A.W. Flat)

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.10 The Lad, 1.40 AB Apologies, 1.50 Swirlwind, 2.45 Healthways Hand, 3.15 Last Almonce, 3.45 Goodbye Girl, 3.50 Cossy, 4.50 Cossy's Horse.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 2.55 BARKLEY BARK HANDICAP HURDLE, 3.01 1122P SKEGHO HILL, 3.05 12-10 WAIN SPILL, 3.09 25-101 KINGFISH PRY (4) (3) 101-2, 3.12 121 SLYNDEN GROUND, 3.16 25-200 AMANCIO, 3.20 1850N KING OF CROSS (2) (1) 185-0, 3.24 202-2 TERNWOOD, 3.28 625-1 HOLY WARRIDOR (3) (1) 70-0.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 4.01 M.M.L. SANDOWN HANDICAP CHASE, 4.04 203-1P BARNSHOP BALL, 4.08 1433N BARVARD CROSS (1) (1) 143-3, 4.11 2111 OGDONAL RUBY (1) (1) OGD-1, 4.14 25-201 ANTHONY BRISTOL, 4.17 25-102 KIRK GIBSON (2) (2) 102-1, 4.20 331-10 CUCKY DALLAS (2) (2) GIBB-10, 4.23 807-24 CUCKY DALLAS (2) (2) GIBB-10, 4.26 811-24 CUCKY DALLAS (2) (2) GIBB-10, 4.29 3-13-12 GALPA VALLEY (2) (1) 3-13-12, 4.32 55-15 ALL CLEAR BARBER (1) (1) 55-15, 4.35 55-15 ALL CLEAR BARBER (1) (1) 55-15.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.30 SET WITH THE TOTTENHAM HANDICAP CHASE (PMA) 10m £16,015, 1.30 SET WITH THE TOTTENHAM HANDICAP CHASE (PMA) 10m £16,015, 1.30 SET WITH THE TOTTENHAM HANDICAP CHASE (PMA) 10m £16,015.

BBC-1

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 2.00 SEARFORT NOVICE HURDLE 5YO 2m £10,678.65, 2.00 SEARFORT NOVICE HURDLE 5YO 2m £10,678.65, 2.00 SEARFORT NOVICE HURDLE 5YO 2m £10,678.65.

Ayr runners and riders

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.45 FAWN, 2.15 Moutons, 2.50 Sunday News/Leche, 3.55 Saddle Steer, 4.30 Golden Fields, 5.00 Lord Lewis.

Channel 4

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time/Details. Races include 1.45 BENTLEY BEECH HANDICAP HURDLE, 2.00 SEARFORT NOVICE HURDLE 5YO 2m £10,678.65, 2.00 SEARFORT NOVICE HURDLE 5YO 2m £10,678.65.

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WORLD CUP CRICKET

Pakistan at ease for the big one

David Hopps in Bangalore

THE suffocating streets outside the West End hotel yesterday resounded joyously to the clamour of a Hindu community carnival...

There is no guarantee that Pakistan will win today but they won the mind game. The psychological difference between the two sides was striking: Pakistan, upbeat and self-assured; India, restless and uncertain.

India v Pakistan is a fixture to eclipse any other in cricket, rendering even such traditional rivalries as England v Australia a skirmish by comparison.

Among the public is phenomenal, especially since it is seven years since politicians sanctioned the last meeting between the sides in India: a Nehru Cup match won by Pakistan.

Pakistan's captain Wasim Akram had little personal cause to smile yesterday, still troubled as he was by a side-

strain suffered while batting against New Zealand. He had done it attempting his favourite clout over midwicket and was beginning to wish he had listened to all that advice earlier in his career to play straighter.

"I'd much rather be playing this match in India," he said. "So much is at stake and the side playing at home must cope with enormous expectations. We do not have that problem."

Wasim's involvement was likely, especially as he vowed to turn out even if he was only 50 per cent fit. His bowling was expected to be impaired, one factor that India calculated might tip the match in their favour.

Wasim, nevertheless, beamed at the sight of his Pakistan players, chatted contentedly to all and sundry while the Indians barely dared to pass judgment on the salad for fear of incurring the wrath of the management.

And India's World Cup to date has, indeed, resembled Cleopatra's "salad days" when they were "green in judgment". Their batting has been over-reliant upon Sachin Tendulkar, now the lead batsman, a gawky, bearded, and their bowling, Kumble and Srinath apart, has looked vulnerable.

Wasim's return to something approaching his best form has been a driving force behind Pakistan's World Cup challenge. Bowling well at 70 per cent capacity in Australia last year, Wasim insisted that he was gradually working up to full fitness for the World Cup.

One Pakistan batsman who will reveal in the occasion is the street-fighter supreme and the only man to have played in all six World Cups. He will retire (again) after the tournament ends and is going in the accepted fashion, assuring all around that things are not as good as they used to be.



Bowled over... Dominic Cork is sidelined at yesterday's net session in Faisalabad

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN GILES

Cork down but not necessarily out of contention for England

DOMINIC CORK may still have a part to play in the World Cup should England survive today's quarter-final against Sri Lanka, writes Mike Selvey in Faisalabad.

Today's game but he was not even able to make a fitness test on the practice ground next door to the team's hotel.

There were conflicting views as to the nature of the injury, however. Cork believes he aggravated a knee he twisted playing against Pakistan last Sunday during fielding practice in Karachi on Tuesday.

But Phillip Bell, the team doctor, considers the injury a result of the amount of cricket that Cork has had to play in the last eight months. "It is an over-use injury," he said.

Lara says sorry after race row

BRIAN LARA yesterday apologised for his remarks after West Indies' defeat by Kenya which he claimed had been taken out of context.

Lara had been quoted by an Indian magazine as telling Kenyan players that the defeat was not as bad as losing to a white team like South Africa.

Words had been "put in a different language" although Vinod Mehta, the editor of the magazine Outlook, said he stood by the story and revealed that the remarks were on tape.

Lara, speaking on arrival in Karachi with the West Indies squad for Monday's quarter-final against South Africa, apologised for what had happened, saying it was "unnecessary and uncalled for."

Motor Racing

Hill cool about hot pursuit

Alan Henry in Melbourne

JACQUES VILLENEUVE laid down a marker as the most exciting new Formula One talent since Michael Schumacher when he finished his first practice session for tomorrow's Australian GP only 0.2 seconds behind his rival, experienced Williams-Renault running mate Damon Hill here yesterday.

In so doing the 24-year-old IndyCar champion signalled that, for the third successive season, Hill can expect the most vigorous opposition to come from his own team. Yet, the Briton, as he has proved frequently in the past, can be at his most formidable when subjected to intense pressure.

Hill was also quick to point out that the revised grand-prix practice format - last season there were qualifying (not merely practice) sessions on both Friday and Saturday - means it would be a mistake to reach conclusions about the first race of the season after two hours' free practice.

Only when this afternoon's single, hour-long qualifying blast gets underway - in which the use of spare cars will again be permitted - can all the bets be regarded as off.

Cricket World Cup Quarter Final Coverage 0891 22 88 29

Rugby League

Challenge Cup semi-final: St Helens v Widnes

Wright turn to upset omens

Paul Fitzpatrick meets the Widnes centre still chasing a winners' medal after 10 years

DARREN WRIGHT refuses to make rash predictions about winning today's first Challenge Cup semi-final at Wigan.

During that time at Naughton Park he has experienced some intoxicating highs, particularly playing in that wonderful Widnes side that won successive championships in 1988 and 1989, and in which he and Martin Offiah formed the most lethal partnership in the business.

Offiah was the prolific one, of course, but in the four seasons they were together more than 900 tries came from their wings alone. There were also a World Club Championship triumph and four successive Premiership Trophy final appearances.

As Wright says: "It was a pity we never got to the cup final. I think anyone who had a feel for rugby league would love to have seen that side at Wembley."

Once Wigan had fallen by the wayside St Helens were installed as cup favourites. The position is justified and there is a feeling that Saints will never have a better chance of claiming the prize that eluded them on visits to Wembley in 1978, 1987, 1989 and 1991.

The omens are good for them, too. In the semi-finals between the sides in 1989 and 1991 - both at Wigan - Saints won and in the six confrontations since 1960-61 the best Widnes have managed was a 5-5 draw. When the fixture resumed in the 1978 final St Helens won that.

But Doug Laughton is back at Widnes after four years as coach at Leeds and, according to Wright, "there is a real buzz about the place. Doug breeds good team spirit and we feel very confident."

They did get there later, in 1993, but deep depression followed. Although Alan Tait and Offiah had already gone, Widnes, overwhelmed by financial crisis, allowed a side which Wright feels had the potential to challenge for the championship to break up.

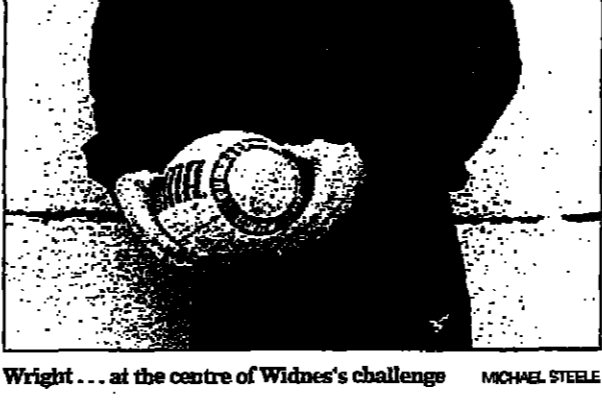
Super League judgment delay

DEFINITIVE judgment on the dispute between the Australian Rugby League and Rupert Murdoch's breakaway Super League will be made on Monday or Tuesday, writes Paul Fitzpatrick.

It was expected yesterday that Justice James Burchett will now spend the weekend considering a number of submissions made to the court in Sydney on Thursday and yesterday.

The English authorities are confident that Justice Burchett would not uphold the ARL's demand for Super League to be banned worldwide three weeks before the scheduled start of the new European League.

Warrington have agreed a three-year deal with Carlisle's 27-year-old Kiwi winger Richard Hazare. Workington Town were plunged into further disarray yesterday when Kurt Sorenson quit as coach.



Wright... at the centre of Widnes's challenge

Rugby Union

Bath face debenture legal action

Robert Armstrong

BATH have become embroiled in an embarrassing row with their long-term debenture holders by making a heavy-handed attempt to have home Pilkington Cup and European Cup matches taken out of the existing deal.

effectively increasing the true value of the debenture to £1,500 for the club. Normally each holder would expect to attend around 21 home games a season without extra cost but the exclusion of all cup games next season, with Europe beckoning for the first time, would reduce the total to approximately 16. That would comprise nine Courage League One games and seven club friendlies.

A total of 320 debenture holders in the Recreation Ground's new Teachers Stand have been asked to give up their right to attend all home games without purchasing match tickets in return for a two-year extension of their 10-year debenture.

Yesterday Quin defended the club's new proposal on the basis that Pilkington Cup matches should be on an all-pay basis because under the rules the visiting club takes half the ticket money. "If the debenture holders don't pay for cup match tickets, then Bath would have to meet that cost," said Quin.

There are right ways and wrong ways to raise the money to fund professionalisation. Sadly this could lead to debenture holders taking legal action against Bath.

However, Bath were fully acquainted with the cup's financial arrangements when they sold the debentures in 1994, covering around a third of the new stand's 1,000 seats.

The club has also angered members by seeking to buy back debentures at a reduced fee of around £800, which would open up hefty profits on each freshly available seat over the next decade.

In a letter to all debenture holders the Bath secretary John Quin declared this week: "We must seek a general resolve in the club's future interests for this issue and we very much hope this will be accepted by everyone on the basis of our revised approach."

Apert from their original outlay, which helped pay the £1.2 million building costs of the Teachers Stand, debenture holders also pay £90 each in stand fees for each season covered by their agreement.

The debenture row must be placed in the wider context of the Bath management committee's anxiety about generating sufficient cash to keep their best players together and invest in facilities next season. In a letter to members last month the club chairman Richard Mawditt pointed out: "We now have to make a further £1 million-plus per annum to run the club and to encourage investors to invest the necessary funding to enable the club to act and run in a full, responsible and professional manner."

England the same but Thomas axed

ENGLAND have given a block vote of confidence to their triumphant Calcutta Cup side for next Saturday's meeting with Ireland at Twickenham which could earn them the Triple Crown, writes Robert Armstrong.

Wales have axed their fly-half Arwel Thomas in favour of Neil Jenkins, one of three changes, in a bid to avoid another Five Nations whitewash when they meet the likely champions France in Cardiff.

Despite a meagre total of two tries in their last three games the England selectors have decided not to try any fresh combinations to improve their scoring potential. Jason Leonard, who this week escaped a possible ban for an alleged assault on Scotland's Rob Wainwright (due to inconclusive evidence), wins his 49th cap against an Irish team buoyed by last week's 30-17 victory over Wales.

Wales have also tried to inject greater penetration into their three-quarter line, preferring the 21-year-old Bridgend wing Gareth Thomas to Wayne Proctor. The front row, which at times was out-powered by Ireland, loses the Cardiff loose-head Andrew Lewis to be replaced by Christian Loader of Llanelli.

Wright... at the centre of Widnes's challenge

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NatWest National Westminster Bank announces that with effect from 8 March 1996 its Base Rate is reduced from 6.25% to 6.00% per annum.

SOCCKER: FA CUP

Sixth round: Chelsea v Wimbledon

Modern man breathing new life into the Blues

Martin Thorpe on Glenn Hoddle, who admits that his club are 'getting there'

WHEN Ken Bates appointed Glenn Hoddle manager of Chelsea three years ago this June, it sent out a signal to the football world that the club's latest attempt to reach the top would be made playing with style and imagination. Cynics looked at the club's recent history and its playing staff and sniggered.

It has been a struggle. His first two years at Stamford Bridge were characterised by injuries to key players that left the team picking itself and made the use of his favourite sweeper system impossible, given the available personnel. He also made some questionable buys: Stein, Furlong, Rocastle, as well as failing to acknowledge Lee's talent earlier.



Arms and the man... Hoddle feels the tension during the dying moments of the third-round FA Cup tie with Newcastle

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Friday's league game against the same opponents in response to the sturdier challenge and cloying pitch. But he could change it again. This season he has had the formations dancing: 3-4-1-2, 3-4-2-1 and even on one occasion 4-1-3-1-2.

Hoddle enjoys playing the strategist. "You have the teams scouted three or four games before and try to combat them. I enjoy that side of it. I haven't had that much opportunity because of all the injuries but, now I've got

strength in depth in the squad and people fit, I can use systems as I feel appropriate." This is modernist thinking: not for Hoddle 4-4-2 come rain or shine. And he is breaking through the cloud of scepticism in other areas, too. Training comprises lots of ball work to improve players' touch, technique and encourage two-footedness. Hoddle has even had two walls erected to kick against, just as street kids used to do.

Even the improvement on the injury front is down to a freshness of thinking. "We encourage players to look after their diet and body, do stretching exercises. We've also done a lot of work on prevention of injuries." Hoddle has been refining each player's system as well as the team's by employing a reflexologist for the past two years. It is a special foot massage that helps cleanse the body.

"There's blockages in your body that reflexology can clear. The players have had their eyes opened, especially on injuries. We've also got three physios because we believe in heavy massage as well, especially if you use the right oils." It sounds more like the Glastonbury festival than a football training ground but Chelsea are living proof it works. Perhaps too well. Hoddle's success has turned the spotlight on him as a potential successor to Terry Venables as England coach.

Fifth-round replay Tottenham Hotspur v Nottingham Forest

Pearce to drag calf in mud

RAIN in the air, a badly drained pitch, a reshuffled team: it must be another "glory, glory" day at Tottenham Hotspur. Spurs are at home in a fifth-round replay to a team that could be without their captain, both wingers and half their first-choice defence. Could Wembley be beckoning them again?

Fifty years ago today Bolton Wanderers won through to the semi-final of the FA Cup. But, as Alan Brown reports, the day ended in disaster: 33 people died and 500 were injured in the stampede after a side-gate was opened and the crowd swelled to 80,000

The day Burnden Park became a graveyard

IT WAS the scene L S Lowry had captured so evocatively in "Going to the Match", one of his most famous "matchstick" paintings. Men and women making their way to Burnden Park, Bolton on Saturday March 9 1946 for the FA Cup quarter-final tie against Stoke City. A game not to be missed. But the day was to be remembered for the Bolton disaster, not the Bolton Wanderers victory.

ground with his boy and, when they saw the crush, he got frightened for his lad. Well we didn't have any fancy locks on our doors, just a two-lever lock, so this man found a two-lever key amongst his own and used it to open the gate himself to get out.

The effect was catastrophic. In the middle of the embankment was a Salford boy, Harold Riley, later to become Lowry's protégé and a painter himself. "It was the first time in my life that I felt the incredible power of a crowd. It was surging like the waves of the sea. So my uncle said to me we'd better get you down to the front, so I was passed over the heads of the men. It was like a ride, sliding down. Then as I reached the front the disaster happened, the barriers fell down and the people fell and there was this moving forward, a kind of a

release of a tidal force and I just ran out. I pushed, I got on to the pitch. "There was a lot of crying and shouting and suddenly I was looking at the crowd from the pitch and I remember a policeman on a horse.

cause of the bombing but you didn't expect it in a football crowd." Nicholls had also been forced on to the track behind the goal. Faced with the carnage of trampled bodies, men dying with their stomachs

people being lifted on to the track," recalls Lofthouse, "but I just thought there's an overspill and a few people have fainted. Then someone ran on to the pitch and said to the ref 'Will you stop the game, please, those people are dead.' The referee stopped the game and we came back into the dressing-room. Some of the bodies were brought through on the way to the St John's treatment room but we'd no idea how had it was."

Boro expect a lift from Juninho

JUNINHO returns for Middlesbrough against West Ham today 24 hours after stepping off a plane from Rio, Brazil. The midfielder has been absent for a month, helping Brazil qualify for the Olympics.



Performance of the week: Steve Bruce (Manchester United), the rock upon which Newcastle's attack eventually foundered on Monday.

A N Other

GUMBERNAULD United have a lot to answer for in the case of this mesmerized master of the monosyllable whose feet spoke volumes on behalf of the footballer's art. For eight years he walked in the paradise gardens, then he became a red revolutionary and brought his fame to the already famous. Later his downs were as spectacular as his ups.

Last week: Peter Cormack (Nottingham Forest, Liverpool, Bristol City).

TEAM SHEET

Tottenham v Nottn Forest Spurs are still hoping that Armstrong will be sufficiently recovered from his ankle injury to lead their attack. Possibility takes over from Seton (on the left and Wilson or Campbell is likely to move up among the substitutes in central defence. Vickers to out with a calf strain but Pearson returns after suspension. West Ham have Mouton and Breaker fit again and Dumitrescu available after gaining his work permit.

West Ham v Middlesbrough Middlesbrough will have both their Brazilians available. Juninho has been helping Brazil qualify for the Olympics. Mouton and Campbell are likely to move up among the substitutes in central defence. Vickers to out with a calf strain but Pearson returns after suspension. West Ham have Mouton and Breaker fit again and Dumitrescu available after gaining his work permit.



Standing room only... the crowd reaches down to the touchline as police attempt to regain control and rescue workers recover the bodies of victims

Outside no hot milk honey

The Guardian Outlook



Catholic elite... some of Ampleforth's pupils walk across part of the college's ample green acres; and (below) reflecting beneath the light of a stained-glass window

PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL STEELE

Ampleforth is again at the centre of controversy. MAGGIE O'KANE and MADELEINE BUNTING report on the troubles at the Catholic Eton

Smells, bells and scandals

FATHER BENJAMIN O'Sullivan chose a place called Monks Wood to die. He suffocated himself with a black plastic bin liner among the new snow drops and old oaks. Nearby were the graves of the Benedictine monks who have been educating the sons of Britain's Catholic elite for almost 200 years. On the hill above him, the boys and masters of St Thomas à Becket's House of Ampleforth College were celebrating the saint's birthday. Father Benjamin was found last Saturday.

Yesterday Father Leo Chamberlain, Ampleforth's headmaster, upset and weary of having to deal with the tragedy, sat by the fire in his study overlooking the valley where the school's cricket and rugby pitches seem to stretch for miles on the North Yorkshire moors. "There's been all sorts of attempts in the papers to link this suicide with another case of sex abuse that we've had, but there is absolutely no connection. The newspapers are speculating and we seem to attract that kind of attention. Maybe it is because people see us as strange monks in a far-off Catholic school in the middle of nowhere, but anything that happens here seems to be picked up by the newspapers and gets columns and columns."

Columns and columns of bad publicity is the last thing an exclusive 12,000-year boys boarding school with falling numbers needs. Ampleforth was last in the headlines in 1994, when four boys were suspended on suspicions that they had committed and the headmaster called in the police. Before that, there was the French kitchen maid who became pregnant, leading to three boys being sent home to take their A levels. A former chief accountant at Ampleforth College was recently jailed for two-and-a-half years after being admitted taking indecent videos of a 14-year-old boy from a nearby town. The 55-year-old man had worked at the school for 29 years.

The most damaging scandals that hit Ampleforth — a Catholic enclave in one of the most feudal corners of England — usually involve sex. Cooped up in the valley on the edge of the North Yorkshire moors, 30 miles from the nearest town, are nearly 600 boys and some 100 monks. The only women are a handful of teachers, maistrons and domestic staff; some of the maids come from a local home for people with learning difficulties. Women just didn't register at the school except in the fevered imaginations of 600 masturbating boys, recalls an old boy. The result is the widespread, low-level homosexuality, common to any boys' public school.

There was always the joke that if you were caught in bed with a boy, you got ticked off; if you were in bed with a woman, you were expelled. I left thinking women were either madonnas or whores. The place was full of porn mags and statues of the Virgin Mary," he adds. The scandals first became public in 1983 when police investigated alleged use of hallucinogenic drugs, which led to a student "breaking out" at mass when he "saw" the boy beside him turning slowly into a lion. Since then there have been long periods of calm in which the school has moved steadily

Famous old boys

Arts: Frank Muir, Stephen Unwin, Rupert Everett (below right), Piers Paul Read

Media: Edward Stourton, Hugo Young

Church and Politics: Christopher Tugendhat, Lord Nolan, Cardinal Hume (above right), Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Ambrose Griffiths, Christopher Heath

Others: James Gilbey, Phillip Lawrence



up the league tables. Father Chamberlain has been headmaster since 1982 and since then the academic results have been improving steadily — 54 per cent of students now reach A or B grades in A levels. Father Chamberlain points to prominent Ampleforthians such as Lord Nolan, Andrew Knight and Christopher Tugendhat.

desired to run round killing each other every Thursday afternoon with air guns," says one old boy. Founded early in the 19th century, the college has played a vital part in the increasingly comfortable accommodation of Catholicism in Britain in the 20th century. The visit of the Queen to Westminster Cathedral last year was a powerful symbol of how far Catholics have come from the days when they were viewed as dangerously foreign and unpatriotic. Much of the credit for that can be laid at the door of Cardinal Hume, the Ampleforthian par excellence. Hume and others like him fitted in very well with the establishment because Ampleforth made them part of it. "His predecessor was Cardinal Heenan from Ilford, whose father was a fruit seller from Ireland and he didn't go down well at all," says Peter Stanford, a former editor of the Catholic Herald and author of a biography of Cardinal Hume. For generations Ampleforth has been able to rely on the loyalty of old boys to send their progeny there. In recent decades that loyalty has worn thin and the college has had to find new markets, turning to the Far East, particularly Hong Kong and Australia, to boost numbers, and has been forced to relax its entrance requirements. But the beauty and isolation of its location may be its downfall as trends change.

ter's view these are "the bog standard usual left-wing kind of questions that we have to deal with." However, Fr Chamberlain sees no place for girls at Ampleforth. He believes that it would be unnatural to bring teenage boys and girls together in the fastness of their Yorkshire school. "I know our place is doing it, but I don't see us doing that here. I think girls and boys perform better when they are educated separately." The boys' bedrooms, which overlook the valley, are plastered with posters of Baywatch girls with just enough clothes on to be acceptable to matron. There's a sense of security about the school's 10 houses. Everyone knows everyone else and they follow their fathers and brothers through the same houses. They don't like to call themselves "elite" but they know that they are. They acknowledge that they, with a ratio of one teacher to 8.4 boys, are getting a unique chance. In each house of about 50 boys there are five tutors specially assigned to help them prepare for exams. All are supervised by a monk who says mass before lunch and offers sherry to visitors. The College's tactics have been almost those of an entryist organisation: infiltrating the elite with Catholics who can protect and promote the interests of the Mother Church but always demonstrating that distinctive — and quintessentially English — brand of Catholicism which Ampleforth has pioneered. The faith is discreet and tactful, but this masks a contempt for the "dog's dinner" of Anglicanism, as one Ampleforthian put it, and a powerful sense of complacent superiority. As the author and Ampleforthian, Piers Paul Read was told, they were members of an exclusive elite — members of a public school and Catholics. As long as there are teenage boys with money and hormones, there will undoubtedly be more "drugs and sex scandals" at Ampleforth. A suicide may not happen again for another 200 years, but for now the college continues to gently decline in numbers with no plans to change, confident that its own unique brand of Catholicism will win through.

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14 THE LEADER PAGE

The Guardian Saturday March 9 1996

Mr Clarke eyes up polling day

KENNETH CLARKE should carry on cutting. Yesterday's reduction in interest rates was the third in four months and ought not to be the last. Even the Bank of England, until recently hawkish in its determination to keep interest rates up, is beginning to get the message. Something very interesting may be happening to this and other economies. There is at least a 50 per cent chance that the Western world has shaken off the inflationary scourge — though not the attendant unemployment — that has afflicted it since the oil-induced commodity explosion of the 1970s. But this is a journey without maps. Regular reductions in interest rates are a good test to see whether the economy can be stimulated without rekindling inflation. Mr Clarke, of course, has a double agenda. He desires higher economic growth but he desires even more to win the next election. Yesterday's Gallup poll in the Daily Telegraph — showing that Labour has increased its lead to 34.5 points underlines the task ahead. Every Conservative gain (as during the Harriet

Harman affair) seems to be followed by a retreat as Labour regains its lost territory. In these circumstances the Chancellor would be less than human if he didn't spend most of his waking life planning a pre-electoral boom. Remember that in every recent general election living standards (as measured by real incomes after allowing for tax changes and inflation) suddenly increased quite sharply in the quarter in which the election was held only to subside in the quarter following. Funny that. This time it won't be quite so easy to fine-tune the feelgood factor. This is partly because — as a result of Mr Clarke's commendable initiative — the Governor of the Bank of England is able to call "foul" in public if the Chancellor starts gambling with the economy for political reasons. But partly also because there is an unprecedented amount of extra-budgetary reflation already in the pipeline including electricity rebates, multi-billion building society hand-outs and a huge number of capital projects financed by the National Lottery. If you add on to this the (time-lagged) effect of recent interest rate cuts plus the Budget tax cuts and the end of excessive stock-building, it would be very surprising if there wasn't some sort of an economic revival later in the year even if world trade doesn't revive. This scenario still leaves room for more interest cuts for two reasons. First, to get house owners and other borrowers out of intensive care and into the shops and, second, to boost capital investment which has been becalmed for six months. Yesterday's announcement by Ford that

it intends to spend £2.6 billion on its UK operations up to the end of the decade was welcome news. It follows a similar announcement that General Motors is to spend £1 billion in the UK. Ministers should however be wary of claiming this as a big success for the government's union-bashing and deregulation policies. After all, if General Motors' \$1 billion is a vote of confidence in Tory policies, how come it is spending over six times as much (\$6.3 billion) in expanding its operations in high-wage sclerotic Germany? That doesn't alter the fact that Kenneth Clarke has turned out to be a surprisingly good chancellor so far. His tenure has been greatly helped by the expansionary effects of the devaluation forced on his predecessor (and with hardly any inflationary repercussions) but Mr Clarke has handled his inheritance with some aplomb. He has read the symptoms of inflation much more accurately than the Governor of the Bank of England even though he exaggerates the Government's role in the process. The fact is that deflation is a world-wide phenomenon and Britain (on the EU's new adjusted figures) has one of the worst rates in Europe not the best as is sometimes claimed. No matter: inflation is still very low in historical terms. And in today's unusual economic circumstances, every reduction in interest rates reduces the cost of living for borrowers and makes a resurgence of wage claims less likely. There is a reasonable prospect that unemployment, which has been dropping for 29 months will continue to fall at a moderate pace. But it won't fall fast enough to make much impact on the

million or so long-term unemployed. To help them the Government must adopt much more active labour market policies. Fortunately, practical policies to help the hard core of unemployed are available, from Professor Richard Layard's guaranteed jobs scheme to Andrew Britton's tax-financed job creation initiative for the public sector (in which many of the expanding industries like health and education reside). The trouble with these ideas is not just that they cost money (though not all that much, as it happens) but that they will take time to be effective. Kenneth Clarke is not that enlightened. His sights are set no further than the date of the next general election. The long-term unemployed mustn't expect miracles.

they have consumed from chemically-covered modern British cornfields, but will be rightly wary of the disease-ridden feral town pigeon.

The Sun was unable to identify the capital's pigeon rustler but rounded up various witnesses: a bird seed seller, the square's local council sweeper, and a police constable responsible for patrolling the area. All reported seeing the offender luring pigeons into a box filled with seed. They claim the square could be denuded of pigeons within seven months. It could not happen too soon. The anonymous poacher seems far more effective than earlier proposals, which have ranged from compulsory rural repatriation schemes involving removal vans strewn with corn to official culls with narcotic bait under licence.

Feral pigeons are a pest. They have long past their tourist-bonus point. Almost every city has them. And in virtually all they over-breed, cosseted by the warmth, cover and readily available food. The British version originates from the rock dove, which can now only be found in remote places like the Outer Hebrides. They infest buildings, encourage rats from the seed and bread which they leave unconsumed, and harbour TB and salmonella. They can even be infected with ornithosis, a form of psittacosis which can spread to humans if dust contaminated by their droppings is inhaled. This in turn can lead to depression, lethargy and in exceptional cases, death. So why is the Sun trying to save them? They leave a ton of droppings on Lord Nelson — and do not even have big breasts.

Why pigeons are fair game

IT WAS certainly a scoop but whether it was in the public interest to raise the alarm is more questionable. Under the splash headline "Coodunnit", the Sun revealed yesterday that a mystery pigeon snatcher had swiped 4,000 of Trafalgar Square's world-famous birds to sell them on to restaurants. No doubt there was a noticeable drop in demand for pigeon pie in the swankier West End restaurants yesterday. The public still falls for the rustic image of rural wood pigeons, ignoring the insecticides which

With India and Pakistan poised to undertake competitive nuclear tests, MARTIN WOOLLACOTT argues that liberalisation has failed in a volatile sub-continent rife with corruption and conflict. Illustration by PETER TILL

A long, torrid journey without maps

WHEN Jawaharlal Nehru was released by the British from Almadra Fort in late 1944, he carried with him the manuscript of his book, *The Discovery of India*, in which he classed his country as one of the four states, the others being China, Russia, and America, on which the future of the world would depend. Even though independence brought partition rather than the united India Nehru had wanted, his estimate of the sub-continent's leading role was for a long time accepted by other nations. Whether India or China would win the contest of development, whether Pakistan could find a way back from military rule, and whether Sri Lanka could continue on the democratic path on which it had set out even earlier than India, these were all seen as critical matters. In the seventies, in particular, the issues of democracy and self-determination in the sub-continent were of world importance.

A quarter of a century ago this month, a fat general called Yahya Khan ordered a military crackdown in East Pakistan, Bengal intellectuals, politicians and student leaders were bundled out of their homes and shot, in the first of many acts of brutality and stupidity which led, after Indian intervention, to the independence of Bangladesh. That independence opened a volatile period in which democracy all over the sub-continent at first seemed assured, with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman triumphant in Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi massively affirmed in India, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the democratic heir in Pakistan. In Sri Lanka, at about the same time, it looked as if the political class would be able to produce an acceptable response to the demands of the northern Tamil minority. But the drama was not over. In all four states, democracy faltered, giving way, again, to military rule in Bangladesh and Pakistan. In India there was the Emergency, an unpleasant excursion into authoritarian rule, and a shaky return to normality. In Sri Lanka, the government threw away its chance of reconciling the Tamils, which led in a few years to the terrible war which is still being waged today. Since then both Pakistan and Bangladesh have returned to civilian rule, the memory of the Emergency has faded in India, and Sri Lanka has found a leader ready to discuss realistic peace terms. But the sense that the sub-continent, having been so central to the world's affairs in the seventies, slipped out of the mainstream toward the end of that decade, remains. The image had been of South Asian societies overcoming difficulties in ways of sharp relevance to the rest of the world. It has been replaced by a picture of societies that, at best, are containing their problems. The dismaying durability of those problems, whatever the ups and downs of formal democracy, is evident. At this moment, it is almost as if the four countries are taking part in a pageant in which each plays a role intended to illustrate a particular vice. India is gripped by a corruption crisis



that has brought the resignations of seven cabinet ministers and will certainly affect the general elections expected in April. The real difficulty in all the South Asian countries, above and beyond any particular incident of h-b-t-aking, has been well expressed by the New Delhi politician who noted that most of his colleagues are "not in politics, but in business". When the legislature becomes a branch of business, corruption is inevitable. Bangladesh's place in this unhappy panorama is to demonstrate the futility of confrontational politics. The ruling party went to the extent of blatant vote-rigging in the gen-

eral election, which the opposition parties boycotted, last month. Daily violence has been the result, with the main opposition party refusing to consider any compromise over fresh elections. A quarter of the country's textile factories, which keep Bangladesh alive economically, are closed. Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Mujib and leader of the Awami League, tries, but so far fails, to recreate the street politics of 1971 and of 1990, when the last military ruler was brought down. Now she has called a general strike for the days later this month which are the anniversary of the Pakistani crackdown of 1971. Every

party in Bangladesh feeds unhealthily on the past. The tendency to regress to a time when the government was an imposed one and opposition was the freedom struggle breaks out everywhere in the sub-continent from time to time. True, governments have inherited some of the authoritarian instincts of their British predecessors, and opposition's ideas and techniques of mobilisation from the old days. But to re-enact the independence drama, staging the ancient play again and again, is not substantive politics. Pakistan, too, is tied to the past, by its prime minister, Benazir, the daughter of Zulfikar.

kar. The government's failure to deal with Karachi, where resentment of the ruling party, ethnic frictions, and covert meddling by intelligence organisations have unhappily combined, has led to chronic violence in the country's biggest city. The pattern of the past is reflected, too, in the continuing influence of the military and intelligence establishments, enshrined institutionally by so many years of military rule, and above all in its desire to achieve equal military status with India. The chances of competitive nuclear testing by the two countries may not be high but they are real. This inheritance from a military past has so far proved impossible to repudiate. Sri Lanka's fate is to demonstrate the terrible difficulty of extinguishing ethnic conflicts in the sub-continent once they are allowed to go beyond a certain point. Worse than Kashmir or Punjab, the Lanka war has killed 50,000 people and lasted 13 years. Discussion of a peace plan which, if not diluted, could be the basis for a settlement, began in the Sri Lankan parliament this week. Whether exhaustion or intrinsigence will prevail, nobody knows. The common thread in the sub-continent, it can be argued, is displacement. Because the structures of power and government could not deal properly with issues of the displacement of power and ethnicity, they tended in the past toward easier objectives. Political campaigns appealing to the poor and disadvantaged classes brought all the parties who are or have been in power to office. Slogans like Mrs Gandhi's *Garibi Hatao* (Beat Poverty) and Bhutto's *Roti, Kapra Aur Makaan* (Bread, Clothes, Shelter) were the key to government. But, in government, it is easier to stick to old connections and to recreate the structures of power and business, leaving social power where it is. Popular discontent then surfaces in communal, caste, and regional form, which in turn provides governments with an occupation and an excuse. The economic liberalisation which all four countries have now embraced to some extent, what- ever its merits, has the disadvantage of increasing social inequalities and the pressure that produces such conflicts. At the end of *The Discovery of India*, Nehru wrote: "There is going to be no peace in India or elsewhere except on the basis of freedom." What the sub-continent has since shown, as he also preached, is that freedom narrowly defined is not enough. Democracy's rescue, which we so applauded in the seventies and again, but less enthusiastically, in the late eighties, is only a beginning.

Unsuitable behaviour

Rattling the bars



Ian Aitken

IT ISN'T given to many reporters to create a new form of political journalism, but that is one of several distinctions belonging to Chris Moncrieff, the semi-retired ex-political editor of the Press Association news agency. Almost singlehandedly, Chris fatally undermined one of the Masonic mysteries of the Westminster lobby system — the anonymous quote from unidentified, and therefore unverifiable, political sources. True, his method of doing this wouldn't have seemed remarkable in any other journalistic field. But at Westminster it was regarded as daring to march up to MPs with a pencil and a notebook, demanding on-the-record comments on the issue of the day. Mind you, like all innovators, he had unforeseen consequences. Moncrieff's enterprise generated a body of rent-a-quote MPs with big egos or small majorities, some of whom seemed willing to say virtually anything to get themselves on the PA wire. The reason was that a flattering invitation to say it again on TV or radio often followed the Moncrieff mention. Competition to get into Chris's vast notebook quickly became intense. Before long, other reporters were being humiliated by headline-hungry MPs, whose only purpose in talking to them was to discover where to find Moncrieff. Now the great man is making news again, this time because his wire service obituary of the former Labour cabinet minister Douglas Jay was a touch too personal to be acceptable to his grieving family. In particular, the once-famous Jay twins took offense at the description of their father as "a shambling figure" whose suits were sometimes alleged to have been bought at Oxfam. According to the Times — which, being a paper of record, put the story on its front page

— one twin telephoned Moncrieff to tell him she was sorry for him because he must be a very sad man. But she would have done better to say that criticism of her father's dress sense was a bit thick, coming from such a source.

For the truth is that Chris Moncrieff is famous for one other thing besides innovative journalism — namely, for being by far the scruffiest reporter ever to ply his trade in parliament. Such was the state of his suits that a visiting foreign dignitary who encountered him was once moved to exclaim: "Good God, man, when did you get these trousers?" To which this supreme representative of British political journalism replied: "From a trouser shop, of course."

Michael Foot was in Moscow last week, recording a BBC television programme linked to his biography of H G Wells. In passing, he paid a courtesy call on the KGB man whose public reputation of the Sunday Times was "did you get these trousers?" To which this supreme representative of British political journalism replied: "From a trouser shop, of course." This week Michael was home, so Mrs Foot ordered some fish. "Did he see the KGB?" asked the fishman. "He did," said Jill. "Well, the next time he's going," said the fishman, "let me know and I can buy the fish for you. Then you'll win another Nobel action." Hampstead fishmen are like that.

Tony Blair shouldn't be depressed by the electoral defeat of his antipodean rival, Paul Keating. The silver lining is that Mr Keating now has unlimited time to teach him how to win elections. He could even fly "home" to advise Mr Mandelson. New Statesman editor Steve Platt, who recently presided over a costly libel case brought by John Major, put his last issue of the paper to bed this week. The paper's current competition offers prizes for the best advice for his still-unnamed successor. Platt's own suggestion should win outright: "Of one thing you can be certain — prime ministers never sue."

Smallweed



IT IS OFTEN assumed that people think there is too much crime, that they're frightened of crime, that they nightly pray for less of it. The truth is quite the

When denied it, they may get morose. The proof of this can be seen in the daily TV listings. Take, for instance, this past Thursday night. Carlton, whose programmes we are privileged to receive in London, kicked off the evening at 8pm with *The Bill*, in which cops probed a case of arson. After that came a slot in which a woman fell out of a window and a child got hit by a dart, but in this case, disappointingly, the lady and asses in uniform were mere paramedics. Never mind: normal service resumed half an hour later, with *ThiefTakers*, in which this week two teenagers graduated from armed robbery to murder, and the police had to haul in swarms of rent boys and under-age prostitutes to help with enquiries. There's always, as you

rape, arson, pillage etc has to be halted for the boring old news, some of the items in which have nothing to do with murder, rape, arson, etc. No wonder TV moguls want to shunt News At Ten to some slot where it causes less interruption, like 5pm, or 3 in the morning! Still, they do what they can to maintain the flow, with juicy trailers before and after the news for the next enjoyable round of serial killing, garrattings, and other tasty pleasures. This Thursday, for instance, they organically promised two new treats for Friday nights: a serial called *The Secret House of Death* (you can guess what that is about!) and a brand new crime monthly for which some high-powered, whiskid has dreamed up the title Crime Month. "Crime fiction... and then crime

After that, we could all settle down to London Bridge, the new Carlton crime series which this week featured a stalker and girl found dead in a lake. Unless you were watching Central, which fielded a different kind of Stalker: ex-police chief John, with a natty number on crime-busting, Or Meridian, which had also declined London Bridge in favour of a two-hour movie in which, according to the listings in the Sun, psychotic Richard Chamberlain would be menacing homeless children. Bliss! Though I'm sorry to say, for viewers to catch the whole of the movie on BBC1 in which, the Daily Star told us, Steve McHattie would shoot a cop and then hide up with a girlfriend. Of course if you don't like this kind of thing you can

roundings, for instance, of Channel 4. Take tonight, for instance: they're starting a brand new seven-week series of late night programmes called *Blue Light Zone*. But wait a second: didn't *Blue Light* have something to do with Dock Green and George Dixon? Indeed it did: and *Blue Light Zone*, which will run from 10.35 till 3 in the morning, when it yields the screen to *The Girls Show*, is described in the TV Times as "an exploration of police culture and procedure". About time, many viewers may think, that someone got round to that badly neglected subject. Anyone who tunes in to the whole of this diet (and most other nights aren't much better) must by definition be sick. If not sick when it started, then certainly sick by now. But the

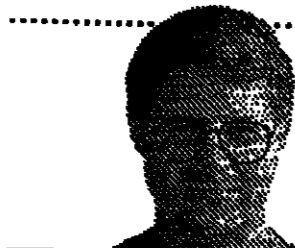
they ought to be sent away for a long recuperation, are the people who schedule these things. NOW THAT Shropshire has erupted (a publicity stunt, Smallweed initially feared, for the Housman celebrations; but apparently not) could we reach some agreement on how to say the word *Shrewsbury*? BBC newsreaders said that the troubles occurred close to Shrewsbury, with the Shrew pronounced as in "show". But a local police spokesman, who'd been shaken up himself, said it happened near Shrewsbury, pronouncing Shrew as in *Taming of*. Smallweed always tries to avoid speaking the name at all when in that locality, for fear of aligning himself with the wrong sort of people. Say "Shroo" and

may think you're a nob. Yet resort, as one so often does, to a simple circumlocution (eg that place in the middle of Shropshire, with time beat at each end and the bridge school which Heseltime went to) and you may end up sounding shifty. There are similar problems with places like Coventry, which some pronounce Coventry, though Smallweed does not, having been brought up to believe that "Coventry" is an upper-class affectation, like "Campton" for Denis Compton. At 13 or so, Smallweed was warned by elders and betters that the Norfolk town of Hunstanton was called Hunston by locals. But either that was untrue, or everyone else there was a visitor. It also used to be said that Cirencester was known to its people as Cus-stetter. If you're told that, do

THE CASE of the Yorkshire child stricken by Peter Pan has led to a spate of references to *Never Never Land*. Never Never Land? Never. What Barrie invented, surely, was Neverland — a term since purloined by Michael Jackson for his ranch in the US. Could this term have become entwined with the concept of "never never" — a euphemism for hire purchase? While on this theme, Smallweed would like to salute the Telegraph columnist Boris Johnson, who in a piece this week referred to the Labour leader's entourage as "Blairocrats": the first such usage, as far as I can trace, in a British newspaper. People updating dictionaries might like to note, however, that the word "Blairocracy" was coined in this column a whole five days (and 217 TV news items) on prime

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

Cherie becomes a prime target



Martin Kettle

BEIN NO DOUBT that they are out to get Cherie Booth. The Daily Express is merely the most heavy-booted humber of Tony Blair's wife. But there are others in the pack, and they scent a kill. From now until the election,

the Cherie chase is on. Political wives, husbands and partners have had an easy time of it in this country — until now. Prime ministerial partners, unlike American presidents' wives, are shadowy figures to the public and have been permitted to remain so. In spite of her long affair with Bob Boothby, Dorothy Macmillan was never in the papers. Mary Wilson wrote her poetry, but kept herself to the back ground. Audrey Callaghan was allowed to get on with her life too.

Even Denis Thatcher, though obviously a highly newsworthy novelty, maintained the discreet tradition. As the forthcoming biography of him by his daughter Carol aims to show, Denis played a blinder for 11 years at Number 10. He never caused controversy, never became an issue, never embarrassed the PM in any way. He was content to let the satirists create an image for him while he got on with his successful business career.

The present occupant of Downing Street embodies the whole tradition. Norma Major is an interesting and entertaining woman, but she stays out of sight, unpuffed, un-interviewed and un-gossiped about. The general public is almost entirely unaware of her existence, and the anonymity of her children is even more scrupulously guarded and respected.

These conventions will be blown apart if Tony Blair becomes prime minister. Unless she makes a very deliberate decision to avoid it, Cherie Booth will become an important public figure too, whether she likes it or not. She is already on the way to becoming part of the electoral battlefield. Whether by accident or design Britain is entering the era of First Lady politics. We had better get used to it. So must Booth.

The "they" who are out to get her are an amorphous bunch. The Tories, of course. The Tory press, of course. But she is also just another victim of our public culture. Our culture lays siege to private life, particularly the private lives of public people. It is one of the worst downsides of being a society without respect.

Why is this culture out to get Booth now? There are many reasons. Party it is political desperation. In spite of the government's best efforts Labour is still — see yesterday's 34.5 per cent poll lead — way ahead of the Tories. The Conservatives find it hard to land a serious punch on Blair himself, so they simply take a leaf from the bully's book. They go for his family instead. The kids. The wife. All targets.

They don't try to turn Tory wives into harpy hate figures. These things are reserved for Labour. This is partly because Labour is the enemy. But Labour also contributes to the situation it otherwise deplors by promoting its leaders' wives. I stand to be corrected on this, but I think it was Neil and Glensy Kinnoek who began the happy couple curtain call tradition which has now become a *de rigueur* after the party leader's big conference speech. The Kinnoeks were and are a highly political and photogenic couple. It seemed very natural to give Glensy a share of the limelight. But it was a turning point. They set a pattern which may have outlived its usefulness, and may even be counter-productive.

What happens when people are freed after wrongful conviction? QUENTIN VAN MARLE meets a man and a woman who have found freedom more traumatic than serving an unjust prison sentence



Free again... Emma Humphries with supporters

A life sentence on the outside

WHEN Eddie Browning left for work one summer evening a few years ago, he was reckoning on getting home sometime in the early hours. He had no way of knowing that he wouldn't be seeing home again for six weeks. Browning made £3 a night as a nightclub doorman and doubled as a bouncer when necessary. Trouble was nothing new to the former Welsh Guardsman. But murder was.

It was Saturday, June 25, 1988 — one week after 22-year-old Marie Wilks, a seven-months pregnant Worcester housewife, had been abducted from an emergency callbox on the hard shoulder of the M50. Police discovered her body 48 hours later down a deep hollow two miles further up the motorway. She had been stabbed in the throat.

It was a brutal killing and one that so disgusted the nation that the West Mercia CID was under pressure to make an early arrest. Within days, the trail led them to Eddie Browning. Various witness statements and Browning's own movements that weekend fitted like a plug into a socket. Better still, the suspect had a criminal record including actual bodily harm.

Browning was taken in for questioning and held for several days. Despite an absence of forensic evidence, plus eyewitness clearance at an identity parade, he was charged with the murder of Marie Wilks and held on remand for 10 months. After a six-week trial at Sturminster Newton Crown Court, Browning was given a life sentence, with 25 years minimum recommended by the judge.

Thus, it seemed, justice had been done and the nation could breathe a sigh of relief. However, unbeknown at the time to all but a few police insiders, the West Mercia CID had withheld crucial items of evidence from the court — and thereby substantially misled the jury. It was only when the case was reopened that the truth came out.

How do individuals like Browning, convicted by law and then exonerated by law, remove the seemingly indelible stigma of murder and the lingering suspicions which await them outside prison walls? Browning is not alone in his affliction from a condition known as post-traumatic stress disorder — a recognised indisposition registered in the International Classification of Diseases, and now becoming widely accepted in the medical profession as an inevitable side-effect of wrongful imprisonment.

Dr Chris Hunter, a forensic psychiatrist and director of Caswell Clinic at Bridgend, South Wales, is sympathetic. He describes post-traumatic stress as "a disorder that usually afflicts its victims within six months of what are perceived as potentially catastrophic events. This results in sudden intrusions into the brain, flashbacks, obsessions, massive anxiety attacks, mood swings, nightmares, sweating and shaking. Conviction for murder that one didn't commit will easily bring it on. It's a disorder that won't necessarily go away when a prisoner is released; that's when it can really begin."

In 1985, following a four-day trial at Nottingham crown court, 17-year-old Emma Humphries was convicted of first-degree murder: she stabbed Trevor Armitage, 33, her live-in lover. Throughout an 11-month remand period and during the trial, when she was unable to take the witness stand, Humphries described herself as a "walking corpse amid a complete nervous breakdown".

MICHAEL WHITE sifts the Smooth from the Hairy candidates among the up-and-coming Tory generation

Seat-seeking missiles

AT THURSDAY night's post-debate reception in the Oxford Union, thrusting young Tory wannabes hover respectfully around Peter Lilley, who has topped the evening's bill. In the corner the lads from Ruskin, the trade union college, prefer to get stuck into the booze.

Even at university, the dividing line between the Smooth and Hairy political tribes is apparent. Labour Clubs at Oxbridge — or anywhere else — are packed with scruffies who dress and talk like, well, like students. Power dressing — New Labour-style, comes later — if at all.

Their Tory counterparts, terrifyingly self-assured many of them, look like embryonic MPs, already polishing their dispatch box manner in the Union. But has anything really changed since Messrs. Gummer and Howard, Clarke and Lamont, Leon Brittan and Norman Fowler did the same at Oxbridge in the early sixties? There is a thesis which says that, after a decade in which Margaret Thatcher's apparatus at Conservative Central Office consciously tried to broaden the social mix — the "arrivistes and garrigates" as Julian Critchley disdainfully put it — the old networks are back.

Eton or Charterhouse, a smart Oxbridge college, a job at a bank or a stint at Central Office, marriage to a peer's well-heeled niece to solve the money bit and reassure selection conferences that we're not gay. Bingo! An MP by 30! The London Evening Standard this week ran a Bright Young Things feature to that effect.

The evidence? Well, there's David Cameron, 29 and head of corporate affairs for Michael Green's Carlton Communications. After Eton and an Oxford first in PPE, he ran the political section in the Conservative Research Department (CRD). Came to prominence in the thick of the '83 campaign, worked for Norman Lamont at the Treasury and was rescued by Michael Howard when Ken Clarke dropped him.

Currently on holiday in the West Indies, Cameron is engaged to Lord Astor's step-daughter, Samantha Sheffield ("an heiress"). He is also adopted Tory candidate for Stafford, (Con maj 7,285). It would take a 6.7 per cent swing to get him out. "He will rapidly become a PPS," trills the Standard.

But Cameron is the exception — clever and lucky. Of the 22 Tory candidates under 30, among the 340 so far adopted, the rest don't have a prayer. They are simply spinning their diamond spurs in hopeless, horny-handed seats.

Thus genial Telegraph columnist, Boris "the Jackal" Johnson, 32, Etonian son of a distinguished Eurocrat, will need a 10 per cent swing to take City of South. Edward Vaizey (aged 27, Oxford, CRD and the Bar) is the son of the late John Vaizey (a Wilson "lavender list" peer) and critic Ms-



David Cameron... the exception — clever and lucky



Lizzie Noel... faces Tony Blair in Sedgfield



Boris Johnson... needs a 10 per cent swing to win

obsessives and you learn that Christopher Heaton-Harris (Leicester South) runs a fruit and veg wholesale firm, is 28 and a football referee — "a nice bloke". Pembroke's Robert Buckland, 27 going on 50, says chums, is an old-fashioned Welsh Tory, easily mimicked by colleagues.

Chesterfield's Tony Benn will be facing Martin Potter, 29, a group financial analyst manager, who is the same age as Mark Francis (Brew East), warily described by some Tories as "rather rightwing". That distinguishes him from Thurrock's Andrew Rosindell (29) whom a journalist described as "very rightwing". He is famous for having submitted a photo of himself and his bulldog for his party conference pass. Tony HQ cut Rosindell's face out of the photo and sent a pass for the dog. That sounds a bit Hooley Henry, but it isn't.

What the trend may really be highlighting is a greater return to pragmatism than conventional wisdom suggests. After the bewildering

16 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In defence of Cherie picking

NOBODY could be in any serious doubt about the purpose of my advertisement seeking details of Cherie Booth's election campaign. I am trying, quite openly, to find out what her views are and then to write about them. It is absurd to imagine that this intelligent and highly-political woman never discusses major issues with her husband, and ridiculous to suggest that such a couple do not influence each other's ideas. So it is a perfectly legitimate exercise to obtain election documents and details of speeches made in public during an election campaign. Nor do I need some den of spin doctors to tell me that this is a good story. The project has been my own idea from the start. Could Patrick Wintour say the same about the inspiration for his article (Express puts Cherie Blair in dock, March 8) and its bedwetting, hysterical tone? As to my membership of the International Socialists in the early 1970s, I am quite happy to talk about it at length to anybody who is interested. I have changed my mind, rather than my image, and therefore have nothing to conceal. Could I say how surprised I

was by the coarse and sometimes violent tone of many of the calls I received from your peace-loving, vegetarian and nuclear-free readers? If they fight the way they talk, then the Royal Marines have need of them. Peter Hitchens, The Daily Express, 246 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 9UX. THE Daily Express may be in danger of shooting itself in its own foot if, as you report, it plans to let Peter Hitchens wheel Tony and Cherie Blair's 1979 election manifesto out to damage Labour's electoral chances. The call for the removal of Cruise missiles (in 1983) will find a positive response in today's electorate: according to a Mori poll (September 15-17 1995) 51 per cent of British people believe nuclear weapons are not necessary for our defence. It's time our leaders woke up to the fact that opposition to nuclear weapons is not a moral position to be abandoned in the interests of political expediency, but may be a vote-winner. Irene Gill, 38 Yarnells Hill, Oxford OX2 9BE.

C is still for comprehensive

ROBIN RAMSAY attacks Labour's education policy, claiming that seeking high standards in education is betraying those from working class backgrounds (Letters, March 8). My speech to the Social Market Foundation — to which he and Bob Moon alluded — was about the renewal of the ideals of those who pioneered comprehensive education, as your leader noted last Saturday. It was about how, in too many cases, those ideals have been lost — and examining ways in which the practice in the best comprehensives can be spread to others. Patronising those who live in deprived urban environments with an expectation of failure will not help my con-

stituents or those in other working-class areas to escape the poverty trap — as it would not have helped me. High standards of education, good quality teaching and the development of study centres to put them on an equal footing with those with the well-endowed homes described by Mr Ramsay are vital. But so is an end to the low expectations which assumes that nothing can be done to improve the education of working-class children. There is one C word which is anathema to Labour's education policy: competency. I make no apologies for that. David Blanksett MP, Shadow education spokesman, House of Commons, London SW1 0AA.

Ship-shape policy on the sea

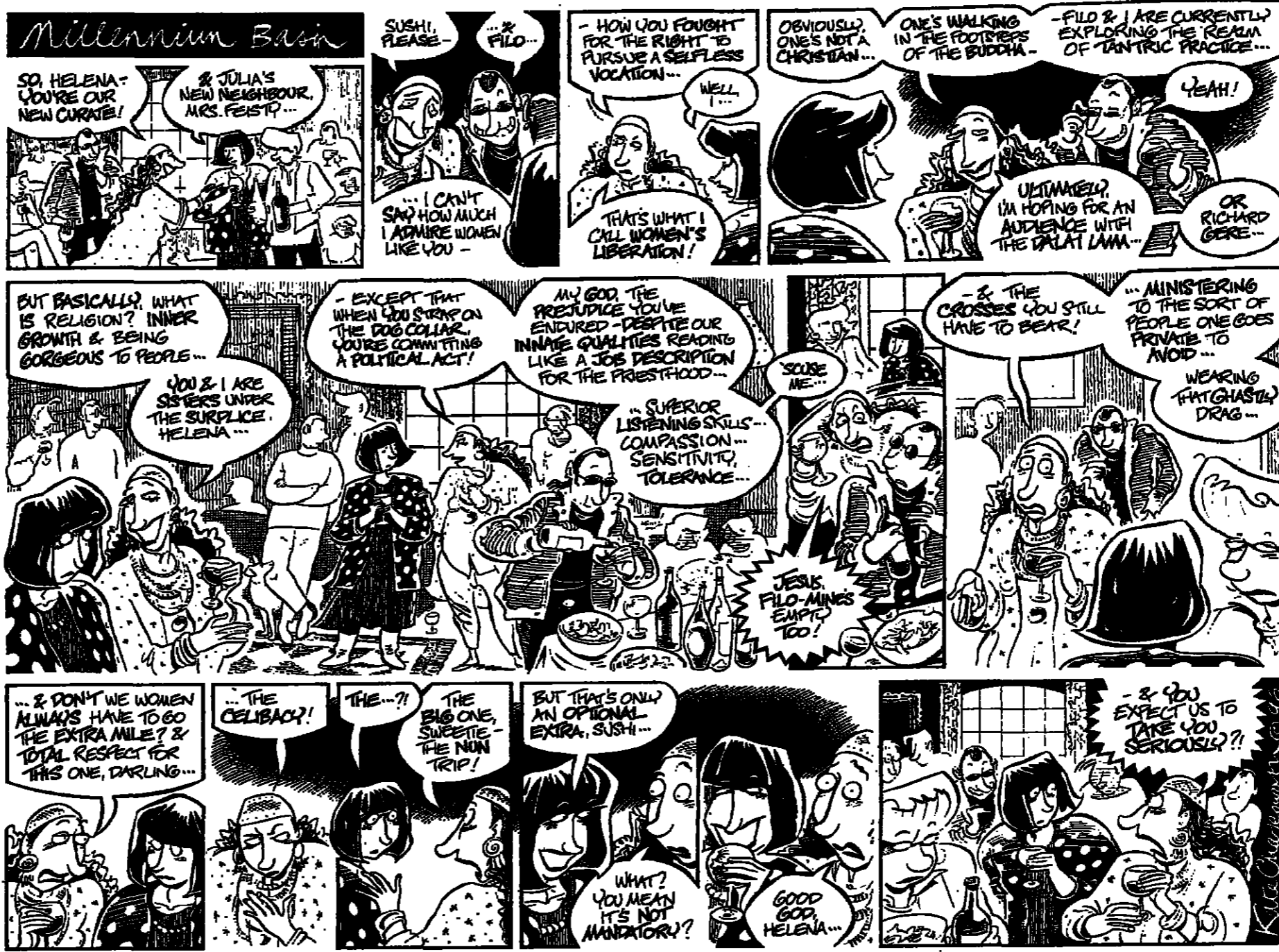
THE public accepts the segregation of the sleeping and living quarters of crews and sailors at sea (Pride and prejudice in the services, March 5). It recognises the importance of retaining a distance between men and women working in close confines for long periods of time. It understands that messy showers and sleeping areas would seriously affect the morale and efficiency of the ship's company. For the majority of heterosexuals, however, sharing a mess with homosexuals is equated to sharing with the opposite sex, with the likelihood of equally deleterious results. Personal space on a ship must be an enclave free from

sexual undertones, real or imagined, in the same way that any civilian home is a private place from which to escape the rigours of work. To assign separate living space to gays and lesbians could be a solution, but one which, in view of the small numbers concerned, is sadly impractical. It is a pity that the decision to maintain the ban against gays and lesbians from the armed forces has been perceived as pandering to senseless discrimination when it is actually a product of common sense. Louise-Marie Abrahams, Sub-Lieutenant, Royal Naval Reserve. Address withheld.

Renewing your home insurance in March or April?

Advertisement for SAGA insurance services. Text: 'If you're 50 or over, just see how much you can save with Saga - call us NOW!' Includes contact details: 0800 414 525 ext. 2582. SAGA Services Ltd, FREEPOST 731, Millbrook Square, Folkestone CT20 1AZ.

Advertisement for Saga Home Insurance. Text: 'You will know how expensive home insurance can be - thankfully, if you're aged 50 or over you can benefit from Saga Home Insurance - a superior household insurance that's only available to mature, responsible people like you.' Includes bullet points: 'Exclusively for people aged 50 or over', 'Cover is comprehensive and low cost', 'Save 30% off Worldwide flights', 'Free pen with your quotation.' Includes phone number: 0800 414 525 ext. 2582.



Out of time and council tax

APPLAUD Radio One's decision (March 8) not to play Status Quo and the Beatles because they are old and boring. Surely it is time to extend this principle to other areas of public life. I look forward to newspapers refusing to print stories about the Tory Party on the grounds that it has been around for ever, and has no attraction for young people. Ewan O'Brien, 145A Stoke Newington High Street, London N16.

Labour rights and wrong

HOPE that public outrage at the leak of the Cabinet's consideration of proposals to exclude employees of small firms from employment protection legislation does not start from the same premise as your editorial on the subject (Workers have rights too, March 8) which appears to suggest that present employment rights are acceptable. They are disgracefully inadequate. Present unfair dismissal law excludes most workers with less than two years' service from making a claim. Indeed, a worker is not even entitled to know the reason for his or her dismissal if dismissed within two years. Present law has failed to extend protection to the growing army of workers not in standard employment contracts. They are disgracefully inadequate. Present unfair dismissal law excludes most workers with less than two years' service from making a claim. Indeed, a worker is not even entitled to know the reason for his or her dismissal if dismissed within two years. Present law has failed to extend protection to the growing army of workers not in standard employment contracts. They are disgracefully inadequate.

missal result in re-employment or reinstatement. Mr Hestline may have done a service by making his suggestion. In opposing him, we must avoid the danger of defending a status quo which requires workers to abandon most normal democratic rights whilst they are at work. Daniel Vuillamy, Senior Lecturer in Industrial Relations, The University of Hull, 49 Salmon Grove, Hull HU6 7SZ. I AM sorry that the Guardian has opposed the Government's proposal to remove employment protection legislation from small firms. I have never understood why employers and employees have not been able to contract together with the intervention of Parliament. But the legislation should mainly be judged on its overall effect. Figures speak louder than words. Since the original Employment "Protection" Act was passed 20 years ago, unemployment has doubled. In other European countries such as Germany, where employment legislation (including minimum wage legislation) is even stronger than here, unemployment is worse. You recognise this fact in your leader ("British workers are the least protected in the EU") but draw the wrong conclusions. In the US, where in the post-war period unemployment was at about 5 per cent, was worse than in the UK, legislation is now less stringent, and unemployment rates compare very favourably with the US. So much for "protection". In the coming global eco-

mic wars, a flexible labour market is one of the keys to winning or losing. In Europe, Britain stands alone in working towards this goal, and should have the courage to continue. A D Harris, Managing Director, L G Harris & Co Ltd, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 4AE. THERE was some interesting linguistic activity going on during the exchanges at Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons on Thursday afternoon. The employment rights of workers in small businesses, we learn, have now become "red tape" (such workers obviously being inferior citizens because of where they work), and in its deregulation zeal the Government is removing only "unnecessary" bureaucracy. Who is it, however, who is defining "unnecessary"? Peter Bolton, 80 Collier Road, East Sussex TN34 3JS. OUR Government consistently rejects economic and social initiatives emanating from Europe, often claiming that Britain must retain its independence, whilst also implying that we have nothing to learn from foreigners. How odd therefore, that so many senior Conservatives want Britain slavishly to follow the tiger economies of South-East Asia. Or does sovereignty not matter when there is a chance of further cutting the wages and welfare of British people? Paul Barry, 22 Rivers Street, Bath BA2 4EA.

How is life a lottery if Camelot always wins the prize?

THE Director-General of the National Lottery, Peter Davis, thinks that the £10 rule change was "a clarification of the contractual rights of players" (Lottery drops guarantee of £10 for three numbers, March 7). Yesterday, I bought my regular ticket of one set of numbers for five weeks, understanding that if I correctly forecast three numbers in a given week, I was guaranteed £10 — Camelot's explanation of the contractual rights, not mine. I now understand that they will not honour their promise ("If you have matched any three numbers from the first six main numbers drawn in any order, you win the Match Three prize. This is a fixed prize of £10"). Anybody reasonably numerate could see that it is statistically possible, although highly improbable, that the first six main numbers drawn in any order, you win the Match Three prize. This is a fixed prize of £10"). Anybody reasonably numerate could see that it is statistically possible, although highly improbable, that the first six main numbers drawn in any order, you win the Match Three prize. This is a fixed prize of £10").

SURELY the current fuss about our National Lottery is focusing on the wrong end of the prizes available. Whilst it will be galling to have the minimum reduced to less than £10, this is in line with the Football Pools' current rules when there are over eight score draws on the coupon. Changing this maximum payout would have been a better use of the lottery's income. I am happy for those who have been made multiple millionaires, but I haven't heard any complaints from big pools winners who have to make do with a mere £1 or £2 million. Robert Jones, 25 Kenilworth Road, Basingstoke. CAMELOT wants to play without having the remotest chance of losing. A boycott of their lottery — replaced by buying scratch cards for the numerous charitable organisations that now have to raise funds in this way — would show them that we do not want to play by their rules. And would hurt them in the only place they care about: Mark Povey, 3 Hyde Street, Hertford SG14 3AL.

Cancer in a foreign field

WE read with considerable concern the article by Richard Colby (Foreign Fields where justice withers, February 26) regarding the cancer brought by Edward Connelly against us. We would like to make the following corrections: "Throat cancer is not 'quite a common condition among the [Rössing] mine workers." In fact, the incidence of throat cancer among employees at Rössing is very low. Out of a total workforce of some 7,000 employees since the start-up of the mine in 1876, only three instances of laryngeal cancer have been identified. Statistically, these cases yield an Age Standardised Incident Rate (ASIR) of 0.137 for Rössing compared to an ASIR of 5.750 for South Africa, an ASIR of 5.500 for Scotland, where Mr Connelly has resided since leaving Rössing's employ-

ment, and an ASIR of 6.10 for the world total statistics. The article also fails to mention the well-established link between smoking and laryngeal cancer, and that Mr Connelly was a smoker. As we have consistently made clear, RTZ remains perfectly prepared to defend any action brought on Mr Connelly's behalf in the proper forum, namely the courts. RTZ has always placed the highest priority on employee health and safety. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) carried out a detailed study at Rössing in 1982 and concluded that the likelihood of radiation-induced occupational illness at Rössing was extremely low. John G Hughes, Head of Public Affairs, RTZ Ltd, 6 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LD.

A minister full of faith

HAVE seen Beatrix Campbell's article on the Royal Trust (Faith healers at work in Irish hospitals, March 5). Your readers will wish to be aware of the following facts which the article failed to address. The Royal Trust is of critical importance to the health service in Northern Ireland. It provides most of the regional specialities to the whole population. It also meets the needs for acute hospital services of the local population of North and West Belfast — without regard to religious affiliation. It enjoys an international reputation for the expertise of its staff and the quality of its care. To suggest that government funding policies will "make it impossible for the Royal to provide the services planned for the next year" is nonsense. The Royal's income in the current financial year is around £120 million. This figure reflects the outcome of my management executive's arbitration on a contract dispute between the Royal Trust and its principal purchaser, the Eastern Board. That arbitration was based on contract guidelines which applied across the health and social services in Northern Ireland. The Royal has been treated no differently to other trusts, including the Belfast City Hospital Trust, which also serves the needs of both

communities. Moreover, the Board of the Royal Trust has accepted my offer of short-term financial help both this year and next year to enable the trust to bring its income and expenditure into line. The Government in Northern Ireland has willingly adopted the Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment administrative guidance, which was developed from a UK-wide initiative on equality proofing. As evidence of its openness on the matter, the Government publishes an annual report on its implementation. "Tiger economies" like Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong itself are city states where lower levels of public expenditure are plausible. Others, like South Korea, have achieved high growth rates only at vast social expense and a level of union bashing that even Mr Hestline would balk at. And no mention is made of the protectionist strategies that nurtured fledgling Asian industries in their formative years — all of which are now unacceptable in Europe. The governor would do well to look again at the lessons Europe should learn from Asia. Anyone who has lived and worked at the grassroots level there must wonder how Britain could develop the same community spirit and social responsibility. The degree of local organisation in many communities is a key factor in

Unhappy Patten for the future

CHRIS Patten's eagerness to learn from Asia is to be welcomed but it was not just Tory right-wingers who were left "choking on their cornflakes" by his interview (Still the governor, March 8). Pointing to the lower tax and public expenditure rates in Hong Kong and elsewhere, he argues that this strategy would also bring higher employment in Britain and Europe. Readers should be cautious about this crude causal relationship. "Tiger economies" like Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong itself are city states where lower levels of public expenditure are plausible. Others, like South Korea, have achieved high growth rates only at vast social expense and a level of union bashing that even Mr Hestline would balk at. And no mention is made of the protectionist strategies that nurtured fledgling Asian industries in their formative years — all of which are now unacceptable in Europe. The governor would do well to look again at the lessons Europe should learn from Asia. Anyone who has lived and worked at the grassroots level there must wonder how Britain could develop the same community spirit and social responsibility. The degree of local organisation in many communities is a key factor in

successful, people-centred responses to poverty elimination. Poverty has grown in Britain since Mr Patten's departure. Working partnerships between state and communities in support of local initiatives are a valuable tool to reverse this trend. But to develop them we must spend public money and learn social technologies from elsewhere. Dan Rees, Finsbury Park, London. I HAVE just read Hugo Young's article (Signs point right for a new Tory gov, March 7). I've often confused the Tory Pattens. Which one was it who told those porkies about the cost of Labour tax proposals during the 1992 election. Mark Leaf, 38 Weardside Drive, Durham DH1 1LE. Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

A Country Diary

MACHYNLETH: A couple of particularly good titles to recommend this week, one for birdwatchers, the other for railway buffs. The first is called Montgomeryshire Bird Report 1983-94 but it is much more than that. It is a summary of the whole history of the county's birds and shows the ups and downs in the fortunes of many species. Doing better than in the past are great-crested grebe, goosander, kite, goshawk and several others; but there is bad news on black grouse, lapwing, curlew, cuckoo, skylark, ring ouzel, tree sparrow and yellowhammer. This report also includes articles on birds of prey, river birds, barn owl conservation, bird-ringing, etc and costs £4-45, post free, from Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, 20 Severn St, Welshpool SY21 7AD. The other book I've been reading is a much better volume, a highly original contri-

bution to the history of an improbably surviving rural railway. As it has for long years, the Central Wales Line still connects Shrewsbury with West Wales via Craven Arms and stations south-west across the counties of Radnor, Brecon and Carmarthen and so to Llanelly and Swansea. It is a leisurely, beautiful journey and in the uplands is quite spectacular. The book, produced by the Community College, Bishop's Castle, is the work of a whole army of enthusiasts delving into the memories of people who over many years have worked on or lived near the line. In addition there are nearly 50 pages of poems. You can obtain this rewarding book, Along the Line, edited by Roger Garfit, by sending £7.50, plus £2.50pp, to the Community College, Bishop's Castle, SY9 8AY, making cheques payable to Shropshire County Council. WILLIAM CONDRY

Wheels, appeals and government deals

Tomorrow's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne takes place amid a storm of local protest, and is just one of the state's controversial money-making schemes. NICK DAVIES reports

IMAGINE for a moment that a newly-elected right-wing government announced that in order to attract lucrative business to London, they had decided to stage an international Grand Prix in the capital, and that without consultation they had chosen as its site the previously peaceful, almost rural surroundings of Hampstead Heath.

Imagine how those who took refuge on the heath would rise in outrage to protest and how they would fight to repel the buzz-saws and the bulldozers. And imagine that this government simply ignored them and carried on regardless, slicing down the trees and carving up the soil to construct more than five kilometres of race track with 16 massive grandstands along its flanks.

Now you can begin to catch some of the flavour of the bitter row that has surrounded the staging of tomorrow's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne's Albert Park.

The event was conceived by the ultra-conservative government of premier Jeff Kennett, who won the Victorian state election in October 1992 and who was portrayed afterwards in a cartoon in the Melbourne Age intently reading a book called *How I Got Tough*, by Margaret Thatcher, declaring "I can't put it down."

In staging his festival of burning rubber among the swigs and roundabouts of Albert Park, he has declared war on the liberal middle classes who live around its edge and on the values they espouse, signalling the arrival of an era in which the only values that count are those that pay their way. In simple terms, the world according to Jeff Kennett means *The Deregulation Of Just About Everything*.

For years, gambling was outlawed in the state of Victoria. Kennett's four predecessors started cautiously to open the door to the gaming industry, but Kennett handed them the keys to the city. Victorians are now engaged in a \$30 billion-a-year gambling binge.

On prime land in the heart of Melbourne, a consortium of local businessmen are building a huge casino. While it is under construction, a temporary version is taking the Melbourne at a rate of \$2.1 billion a year.

The city which was once distinguished by its parks and clattering trams has also be-

come the capital of Australia's sex industry. Kennett's government has legalised escort agencies so that there are now more than 230 companies selling women at \$100 an hour, paying Kennett's government \$500 for every phone line. Kennett has lifted a moratorium on brothels, whose numbers had declined under the previous Labour administration, and now charges them a licence fee of \$1,200 plus \$500 for every bed. He has allowed sex shops to flourish, selling hard-core pornography in open defiance of federal law, and he has permitted the arrival of sex bars where naked table-dancers offer musical gynaecology to drinkers.

When he first announced the plan to build a Grand Prix race track by the lake in Albert Park, his opponents had numerous weapons with which to fight him. So Kennett removed them all. They could have challenged him on planning grounds or tried to prove he was in breach of laws to protect the environment. Kennett pushed through legislation to exempt the Grand Prix from all planning and environmental regulation. They could have sued him for damage to the trees, but Kennett pushed through legislation to block all applications for official paperwork connected with the deal.

In response, thousands of objectors formed the Save Albert Park organisation and took to the streets with placards. They turned out to protest as workmen set about destroying 1,000 of the parkland's trees. More than 600 were arrested, but the courts said they had broken no law by protesting on public grounds. Kennett then pushed through legislation to seal off sections of the park for 17 weeks, so that it became an offence for members of the

public to walk there. The man who stood to earn most from the Grand Prix project, its managing director Ron Walker, was a close personal friend of Kennett's. Walker's company was guaranteed and funded by tax-payers in Victoria and yet no one knows how much public money has been invested in him.

Together with the outspoken media millionaire Kerry Packer and another close friend of Kennett's, Lloyd Williams, Walker runs the company which was awarded the monopoly to operate casinos in the region. Walker personally had earned \$17.7 million from the casino deal, while Packer had gained \$80 million and Williams \$29.7 million. As more and more money was spent in the casino, other businesses began to suffer. Most major retail industries in Victoria reported a year without growth; spending on clothing had fallen by \$5 million and on leisure services by \$47 million. The Retail Traders Association decided to survey 14,000 businesses to check the effect on them. Meanwhile, the casino announced that it would never close, not even on Christmas Day.

The city's two archbishops have linked the casino with the staging of the Grand Prix. The Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Frank Little, spoke out at a Christmas midnight mass in St Patrick's Cathedral, accusing the organisers of the race and the owners of the casino of destroying Victoria's cultural and social fabric. He and the Anglican Archbishop, Dr Keith Rayner, both declined to bless the new track.

Kennett's justification was the bottom line. "We have a responsibility as a government to try to lift this state out of the doldrums." He said the church leaders were "yesterday's people".

The different strands of "Jeffism" have now become twisted together. Pornography stores are offering a 20 per cent discount to customers with Grand Prix tickets. The biggest brothel in the city now sells its women for casino chips as well as cash. Like Thatcher, Kennett may have torn up tradition and provoked the hatred of many, but he has won the hearts and wallets of those who profit from his values.

And with the opposition still profoundly damaged by the memory of their last period in power, Kennett is still likely to win the state elections at the end of this month.

One of the Albert Park protesters put his views quite simply. In the midst of a Melbourne protest last year, his placard addressed his enemy directly. "Kennett, you gormless pillock. And he owes it all to Margaret."

ALEX DUVAL SMITH on a growing threat to the national gastronomic compulsion as more Parisians eat vite

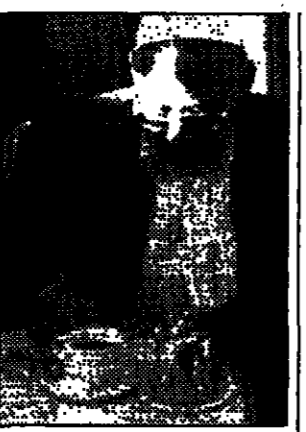
Mange tout de suite, waiter

PARISIAN cafés are not yet resorting to calls of "une pûte de bière et un paquet de chips, s'il vous plaît". But a new survey has confirmed every French person's fears: gastronomy is losing out to fast food.

At Burger King in Place Voltaire, 30-year-old Franck looked sheepishly at his half-eaten Whopper. Every fibre in his body told him that he should have gone to the café next door, rather than spend fr.44.30 (\$5.30) on a burger, chips and a Coke. There, he got to have a croque-monsieur (fried cheese and ham sandwich) and a beer for less money.

"This won't even fill me up. You walk into fast food restaurants believing they will be cheaper, cleaner and somehow better because you help yourself. None of this is true but you get caught up in the illusion," he said. Franck and his girlfriend, Patricia, who work in a children's activity centre, admitted that their eating habits were in line with the findings of a survey in Le Figaro this week.

Compared to 30 years ago, the French eat fewer calories and spend less time and money on their bellies, according to the survey. In 1965, the average person spent two and half hours a day at the dining table. Today's figure stands at 1hr 20 mins. The big losers on the dinner table are pota-



Last orders? ... time spent at the table is shrinking fast

atoes, sugar and bread, the consumption of which has more than halved. Fresh vegetables and red meat are down by 25 and 15 per cent respectively. The winner is frozen food — up from 2kgs in 1965 to 37kgs per person per year.

Patricia nodded in recognition. "The trouble is, people do not appreciate a good food any more. The other day, we had some friends over for dinner. We made a real effort, even with the table decorations. But nobody noticed," she said.

Franck added: "Family dinners are a thing of the past. My old man still goes to corner shops because he says he appreciates the quality but most of us are happy to shop in supermarkets where all the food you buy tastes the same."

As ever, the Anglo-Saxons are seen as the culprits. Even though "Je plateau repas TV" (TV dinners) has not caught on, take-away Chinese dinners and home-delivery pizzas are booming. Annie, also aged 30, at the next table in Burger King, admitted she increasingly saw food purely as nourishment. "I would rather see a good film than spend my time eating."

Tonight I'm going to the cinema and I will almost certainly have fast food before or after the film," she said.

Boulevard des Italiens, a street thick with cinemas, has its McDonalds. But even the French restaurants here, like the Batifol and Roman chains, promote the speed of their service above the quality of the food. Then there are the crêpes stands, the cafés "formules express" and Lina's Sandwiches.

But some food experts reacted defensively to the survey's findings. Claude Grignon, an agronomics researcher, said: "Before fast food, self-service restaurants had their time. It is wrong to think France has lost its love of food."

Yet only last week, the top Tour d'Argent restaurant lost its third Michelin star and the agriculture minister launched a television advertising campaign to encourage French people to have "a taste for taste".

Mr Grignon said: "We are looking at a change in eating patterns, not necessarily a decline. Women work, so they have less time to cook. There is also a move towards uniformity. If you tried selling a real free-range chicken in a supermarket, people would complain that its taste was too strong, its meat too dark and too tough."

Franck and Patricia agreed, but felt the survey proved there was a real threat to their quality of life. Franck said: "We are all caught up in the McDonald-Disney-frozen-food culture. What's happening is a sign of over-consumption in a sick society."

"Several of our friends have started eating macrobiotic food, which is a kind of over-reaction to this general trend". And, finishing the last chip, he added: "It's only going to get worse with McDonald birthday parties and an increasingly high-speed approach to life."



Keeping his head... Martin Mears presides over a faction-riven society

Country lawyerman takes on the City sticklers

Law Society president Michael Mears has had to put up with some flak but, finds JOHN CUNNINGHAM, he can give as good as he gets. Photograph: SEAN SMITH

JUST six months after he started his new job, Martin Mears was astonished to be presented with a gold watch. The inscription was pretty startling, too: "Don't let the bastards get you down".

It's not the sort of memento the Law Society, the venerable body representing the interests of 65,000 solicitors, usually goes in for. For the last 40 years, Buggins after Buggins has been elected president without any contest. When Mears broke ranks and stood against Buggins No 41 — and won — all hell was let loose in the Law Soc's sarcophagus. Since then, he's become so embattled, his friends needed to present a showy token of support.

Almost alone among the professions, solicitors have made their recent rows public. What's more, they're about naked self-interest and personal attacks on the players are as much part of the furore as outrage over issues. Recent headlines in the Mail on Sunday screamed: "The strange love life of the Law Chief who believes in the sanctity of marriage."

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held? A tiny number. So why, you ask, do the 75 council members, in their mausoleum in Chancery Lane, worry about it so much? "It is a re-banging of the feminist drum, an issue they'd like to keep alive for their own obvious reasons. If you complain, they say 'Aha, you're soft on sexual harassment.' Or 'Perhaps you're in favour of it. Absurd!'"

But it's true that it was only when complaints about serial groping by that vice president were made by council member Eileen Pembroke, that the largely male bastion on Chancery Lane became aware that a problem existed within its own portals. But does he accept harassment occurs? "Of course it exists. But then you've got to ask yourself 'Is it a great problem?' Now, I'm sure some solicitors batter their wives, but is it a problem?"

The implication is, of course, that an isolated instance isn't the same as a trend requiring investigation and remedy. Mears makes an analogy that plunges him into deeper water. "If it was established that one solicitor was an alcoholic, would that be an argument for breathalysing all solicitors?"

'Excessive numbers are bad for the profession. We have an influx of cheap labour, and some end up as para-legals'

Of course, there's no parallel at all, but Mears, who looks every inch — every cubic inch — the rubicund country practitioner he is, steams on regardless.

"Last year I opposed targets for the employment of ethnic minorities. And I attracted the predictable opprobrium. It's un-enforceable, it's ineffective, it's gesture politics. I consider I'm a member of a liberal, learned profession. It's not necessary to tell me everyone should be considered on their merits. It would be quite shameful to turn somebody down, qualified for the job, for reasons of sex or race."

No wonder his enemies' problem — a word much used at the Law Society these days of cliques and cabals — is not that he is right-wing, but that he's a maverick. You can see why they're concerned about his unpredictability. Politically, he's always voted Tory, but is aware

of the casualties as well as the triumphs of Thatcherism, and says his enthusiasm is dented at the moment. Professionally, he's wealthy enough to have spent thousands of pounds on his election campaign, but says he'll certainly accept £7,500 in expenses when he stands for an unprecedented second presidential year — if the Society decides on this allowance for all would-be office holders. But while he's shunned some presidential perks of office, he has no qualms about occupying a handsome 18th century house in, ironically, Carey Street, where the Law Society lodges its presidents. "I live in a far grander place than this in Norfolk," he says, in his panelled parlour while the butler lays dinner for a dozen in the next room.

However, while the law might be a liberal profession, solicitors cover the political spectrum. Whatever their hue, their professional body is fissured and seething with factions. And Eileen Pembroke (husband of the Labour MP) stood against him for the presidency, alleges that Mears has created an unprecedented climate of fear and distrust in the profession.

So there are tricks and traps laid for him, he reckons. But then, as Mears admits, he does sometimes give. Then the hip. And the fight has got dirty. The Mail on Sunday said he was a hypocrite claiming his public support for the sanctity of marriage — he believes there are too many divorces — is at odds with his own situation as a divorcee. His ex-wife was quoted in that paper as saying that he really believed in marriage, but he was a philanderer, who reckoned there should be one law for himself, and another for the rest.

Mears is still smarting from the sting. "You've got to ask yourself how and why the Mail on Sunday focused on my marital arrangements. For God's sake I've been separated from my wife for 10 years and divorced for five. This isn't exactly a case of the Casanova of Norfolk. They tracked down my wife and asked her to give me a glowing reference which, unsurprisingly, she declined to do."

But apart from the personal flack — and Mears gives at least as good as he gets — the big problem is that the Law Society is so ossified in its practices and procedures that it is largely immune to the reforms he wants to introduce. Everyone's transfixed by an air of "No Can Do-ism" as he calls it. "In the past, the Chancery Lane orthodoxy has been that it was more or less impossible to do anything worthwhile. The Master of the Rolls

would object. Or the Lord Chancellor. Or the Office of Fair Trading. Or the Monopolies Commission. Or the National Consumer Council."

Mears is willing, at least, to fight: he wants to halt the gloop of cut-price conveyancing by ending professional indemnity insurance which compensates clients if a solicitor botches a house sale. But the tide in the profession is against him. It is, too, in his campaign to reduce the number of law graduates, some of whom are undercutting the market in order to scrape a living.

"Excessive numbers are bad for the profession because we have an influx of cheap labour, and some of them end up as para-legals. But I'm accused of protectionism if I say it is in the community's interests to have strong, well-trained professions."

Indeed, Mears the Maverick

comes across very much as the protector of his profession, in spite of the unnoticed, unrewarded *pro bono* work his firm, and many other practices do for hard-up clients. What he can't take is that, for all his interest in democratising the Law Society, money still matters.

"You are asking for *pro bono* work from people who are doing well. You are saying 'You are doing well out of society, give some of it back'."

So is he a fat cat? "No. No. No. Don't you dare say that. I'm not admitting anything of the kind," he says emphatically but affably.

All right, but as his own firm with 50 staff and four offices, can afford to do some work for free, he must be a *farish* cat!

"It is a reasonable country practice. You'd never get me to admit I'm a fat cat. Ever."

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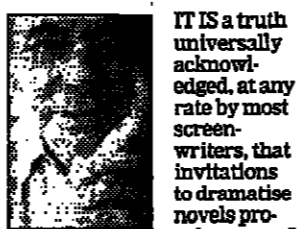
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Cops and robbers

Screenwriter ALAN PLATER has walked the mean streets of crime fiction adaptation . . . and lived to spill the beans



Hard men and true . . . Dalziel (Warren Clarke) and Pascoe (Colin Buchanan) in Plater's TV adaptation of Reginald Hill



IT IS a truth universally acknowledged, at any rate by most screenwriters, that invitations to dramatise novels provide some of the most ignoble reactions in the halls of creativity: from outright lies ("Well I will of course need time to re-read Trollope before I commit myself") to uncompromising hostility ("Why should I give that best-selling bastard the kiss of life?"). Beyond that, as a long-time thriller freak I've always been game for a whack at any writer I admire: Conan Doyle, Margery Allingham, Agatha Christie, and, most recently, Ruth Rendell.

The Dalziel and Pascoe invitation from the BBC was easy to handle. I have been reading Reginald Hill's books as fast as he can write them since they first appeared in 1970. Set in Yorkshire, the novels are about the relationship between a senior CID officer called Andy Dalziel — pronounced Dee-Ell and, according to the man himself, the only name in the English language pronounced by using only its first and last letters — and Peter Pascoe, a young graduate cop and therefore an obvious target for Dalziel's venom. The cooler critics are bound to call the relationship symbiotic, so remember: you read it here first.

All the best fictional detectives work in twos so they can talk to each other and we can share the deductive process: from Holmes and Watson to Morse and Lewis and, my personal favourites, Nick and Nora Charles in *The Thin Man*, key influences on the Trevor Chaplin and Jill Swinburne of *The Bedside Book of Tricky*. To be sure, Philip Marlowe walked the mean streets alone, but he had Chandler's first-person narrative to keep him company and sustain the voyage of discovery.

There is a major Nora Charles / Myrna Loy element in Reginald Hill's books. Her name is Ellie, initially Pascoe's girlfriend, later his wife and mother of their child. She is also a high-flying academic who later becomes a successful novelist and, inevitably, is dragged into several of the investigations. In many ways, she is the toughest of the three main protagonists.

As an old lag who served part of his 1960s apprenticeship on the original *Z Cars* programme, I have a ragbag of theories about the cop-show form. The central idea is that audiences are 20 times more interested in spending time in the company of characters they care about than they are in the minutiae of deduction. Nobody really gives a damn about the fingerprints on the wineglass. The simple secret of every plot, as Ed McBain pointed out, is that something happens to disturb the equilibrium of a particular universe, whereupon the police ride into town and restore that equilibrium, with a few capers along the way.

Reginald Hill brings various highly personal and sometimes idiosyncratic elements to the classic form, notably a strong sense of the community in which the police operate. In the first book, *A Clubbable Woman*, the focus is the local rugby union club; in the second, *An Advancement Of Learning*, a minor university campus. There are also traces of what the symbiotically inclined might call intertextuality: a homage to the country-house murder in *An April Stroud* and to the great Patricia Highsmith in *Deceit*.

He also permits — even encourages — his characters to be changed by their experiences. Unlike Holmes and Watson, who remain unaltered throughout all their adventures, Pascoe and Ellie grow up, and Dalziel matures, without ever becoming soft and cuddly. In our opening episode he describes himself to Ellie thus: "I use foul and abusive

language. I pick my nose and scratch my balls. I fart louder than is biologically necessary. And I do it all in public. I've got sod all to hide, more's the pity. I do my job, collect my wages, go home and have my tea. Generally in the middle of the night. And I don't know any funny handshakes."

Throughout the books runs a gently subversive quality. The crimes are rarely pure and never simple; the resolutions frequently ambiguous and contradictory. The humour is simultaneously raw and sophisticated. The verbalisms are good, too. A single-bladed knife for pruning roses is described as a "non-secateur".

In translating the books into the language of the small screen, we took two simple but crucial decisions. The first was to tell the stories, as far as possible, in their natural chronological order. The second is more unusual. Because each of the novels has a flavour unique to itself, we made no attempt to impose a house style. The brief to the directors was to find the truth of the tale and work outwards, rather than arrive on the set with a suitcase full of this week's Tarantino ticks.

This being so, *A Clubbable Woman*, directed by Ross Devinish, is simple and on-the-nose like the rugby scrum that sets the tone at the top of the show; *An Advancement Of Learning*, directed by Maurice Phillips, nods to the film noir tradition, with a homage to Carol Reed specially requested by the screenwriter; and *An Autumn Stroud*, directed by Richard Standeven from a screenplay by Malcolm Bradbury, is a subtle mix of country-house mayhem and mist over the marshes.

The long-term plan is to make three films a year until the audience grows weary or until the end of recorded history, whichever is the earlier.

There were, naturally enough, a few wobbles along the way. The shooting schedule meant that all three stories were on location at precisely

the wrong time of year. A *Clubbable Woman* is set around Christmas but was shot in last year's higher than average high summer. Consequently we had to take the advice of Alan Rickman's Sheriff of Nottingham and cancel Christmas. One of the main set-pieces in *An Advancement Of Learning* is a cricket match but we were filming in October at a location without a cricket pitch so logistics stopped play. And the hawk-eyed will have observed that Hill's title *An April Stroud* has become an *Autumn Stroud* in our version — another inevitable seasonal adjustment, but the shroud is intact. We have also tried to convey the visual quality of Yorkshire without setting foot inside the county boundaries.

These three books were written in the early 1970s but updating presented fewer problems than we might have anticipated. Professionalism has arrived in rugby union and student occupations have gone out of fashion, but the underlying attitudes remain sound and true, and Ellie is an emancipated woman well ahead of her time.

One of the sweeter by-products of the adventure has been a first-time professional association with Malcolm Bradbury. We first met in Hull around 1960. He was a bright young academic and promising novelist who'd taken a job on the campus, succeeding another bright young chap called Richard Hoggart. It was a scuffling, apathetic architect with a couple of radio plays hiding under the drawing board.

We have shared the joyful task of dramatising the Reginald Hill books, and aside from an alarming tendency to deliver his scripts ahead of time, the lad Malcolm's done great. With almost a century of writing experience between the two of us and Reg, the inescapable conclusion is that win, lose or draw, this is as good as it's ever likely to be.

Dalziel And Pascoe begins March 16, on BBC1, 8.05pm

For too long arts have been dominated by the visual. Now radio is getting its own back

The sound of silence

Radio

Anne Karpf

INVITED to re-associate with the word "radio", few of us would come up with the word "art". The fact that, to many, art connotes the visual reflects the low place in the hierarchy of senses that hearing occupies in Western countries — like taste and smell, it's almost invariably ranked after sight, even though it's one of the most evocative of senses. Anthropologist Richard Thorn gave his students a questionnaire that asked them to identify the two or three dominant sound markers from their childhood: they all came up with deeply emotional and personal associations — the scraping of Dad's razor or Mum singing in the kitchen while cooking produced a powerful remembered sense of security.

And yet, though the 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of successful artists like Brian Eno and Laurie Anderson experimenting with the aural and oral, we still don't have a cultural theory of sound that parallels the visual. One reason is that sound artists come from many different disciplines — acoustic composers and producers of computer-generated music on the one hand, and on the other installation artists and visual artists moving into sound. Both kinds appropriate bits of original or found sound and reconstruct them into a new whole. Some have ventured into Warholian excess: the Canadian station Jupiter once ran a five-hour broadcast of the sound of paper being torn.

This month at an international symposium organised by Northern Arts and the University of Sunderland, British sound artists played examples of their work. Katharine Norman's digitally produced montage uses silence to make the

listener stop and ponder in a way no traditional radio producer would dare risk. Bill Furlong, the doyen of British audio artists, records people answering banal questions like "where do you come from?" and then edits their answers to bring out an abstract quality that "operates more like colours in a painting. You stop hearing the literal meaning of the words and start to hear something more expressive." And it works. In other countries sound art is to be found in community radio stations. In the 1980s Japan experienced a boom in "mini FM" stations, "narrow-casting" to a 100 metre radius, which didn't require a licence because of the weakness of their signal. Tetsuo Kogawa argued that such "block radio" could reactivate areas and empower people and, to show how simple the technology was, managed in 15 minutes to construct part of a transmitter. In Berkeley, California, Over The Edge is a weekly

three-hour "live-mix" night-time show on KPFA made by an experimental group called Negativland. They recycle audio material into an improvised new mix, and invite listeners to participate via the telephone. Callers-in can get directly on to air without screening or time delay and deposit ideas and sounds into the mix — musicians can improvise in with their own music or elaborate tapes, and Don Joyce brews it all together, sometimes putting opposing callers in the left and right stereo channels, and ruthlessly cutting those who aren't interesting, who are then free to call in again. The end result is strangely compelling.

So far most British experimental audio work has been off rather than on air. But with the growth in ambient music, more inventive DJs, sampling and surfing, audiences are becoming increasingly familiar with this kind of work. And from May 14 till 19, the Sound Works Exchange is running a five-day event in which British and German sound artists, experimental composers and DJs will explore total immersion in sound through discussions and performances in London. The sonic is clearly booming.

For more information contact The Arts Depot, 26 Pancras Road, London NW1 2TB.

Reviews

MICHAEL BILLINGTON on Theatre de Complicité's ambitious new work, *Foe*

Staging the unstageable

IS ONE a friend of Foe? Watching Theatre de Complicité's version of J.M. Coetzee's novel that name, premiered at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, I found it difficult to get enthused. In their versions of stories by John Berger and Bruno Schulz, Complicité brilliantly married physical expressiveness with powerful fables: here they are wrestling with the intractable problem of turning a multi-layered novel about storytelling into a piece of gripping theatre.

The ideas themselves are interesting. To whom do stories belong? Is silence as potent as language? Is there any such thing as historical truth? The adapter, Mark Wheatley, plays fair with Coetzee's basic intent. He shows a desert island castaway, Susan Barton, encountering the shipwrecked Crusoe and his mute black companion, Friday, and, once back in London, telling her story to the writer Daniel Foe (the original family name). Because Crusoe has

died on the voyage home and Friday's tongue has been cut out, Susan inescapably appropriates their stories just as Foe manipulates hers. As in a way does Coetzee himself.

The novel works both as a hall-of-mirrors Borgesian conundrum and a political metaphor for the author's native South Africa: in particular for the way the disempowered are, literally, rendered speechless. But inevitably it undergoes a sea-change when staged. The inverted commas, in which Susan's story is permanently told, are submerged. Characterisation is simplified so that Foe, by paying someone to impersonate Susan's lost daughter, becomes more nakedly exploitative. And gnomic utterances, such as "Writing is not doomed to be the shadow of speech", begin to sound like surreal discussion-topics.

The production by Annie Castledine and Marcello Magni strains every nerve to give the story theatrical life. The desert-island section, with its master/slave



Cast adrift . . . (left to right) Patricia Naiambana, Hannes Flaschberger and Kathryn Hunter

relationship and bolts of thunder and lightning, is like a compressed Tempest. Foe's London is evoked through a lowering desk and chair precariously perched on Peter Mumford's fissured mud-caked stage. And the acting is never less than good. Kathryn Hunter's Susan has the desperate urgency of a woman with a story to tell who finds herself confronted by the insatiable demands of fiction. Patricia Naiambana hauntingly implies both Friday's silent strength and belated access of power when he

owns the writer's furred guild-robes.

But Foe, lacking much interplay of character, is theatrical without being dramatic and cannot match the shock-effect of the novel, in which we are finally reminded that Coetzee is the controlling authorial voice who has all along been telling the story. It's all done with great style but Complicité have simply chosen an unstageable book.

At West Yorkshire Playhouse (0113-244-2111) until March 30, then on tour.

Ted's triumph

Television

Adam Sweeting

THEY say music comes in two types, good and bad. By the same token,

comedy either makes you laugh or leaves your face frozen. Annie's Bar is a noble specimen of the latter, and has the added effect of making any archaism you're sitting in suddenly feel as though it's full of lumps of cement and broken springs. You're in much safer hands

with Father Ted (C4). The first series made everybody laugh except the Mall On Sunday ("an orang-utan could produce something funnier"), and on the evidence of last night's new episode, Hell, the second series will too.

Encouragingly, Father Ted remains virtually indescribable. Dissecting TV comedy is like painting the Golden Gate bridge — you don't know when to stop, you wish you'd never started and you suddenly discover you've lost your sense of humour — but Ted offers succour to the critic by conforming to nothing: it resembles other classic comedies only by being unprecedented. Not even the fact that Channel 4 are testing Father Ted to destruction by dumping it into the Friday night morass of comedy and pitiful "youth" programmes can conceal the fact that writers Graham Linehan and Arthur Mathews have created an original.

The main characters are still there, is Ted himself, the disgusting and deranged Father Jack, Ardal O'Hanlon's idiotic Father Dougal, and the joke housekeeper Mrs Doyle. But the genius of Father Ted is the way its spirit can be transported to the most irrational settings. This week, the men went on holiday in a squalid, storm-blasted caravan somewhere in Ireland. Desperate for something to do, Ted and Dougal watched the kettle boil. "The kettle's boiled there, Ted. Will I put more water in and turn it on again?" asked Dougal. "No," said Ted. "I liked it best the first time." Dougal

looked out of the window through binoculars and saw herds of wildebeest charging across the veldt. Ted rang Father Larry on his mobile phone, causing Larry's car to plunge over a cliff. Bloody good laugh, actually.

And for those of you who like comedy, there's sport . . . or there should have been, with England's cricketers only a few hours away from embarrassing defeat by Sri Lanka in the World Cup quarter-finals, and the new Formula 1 season starting in Melbourne in the early hours of tomorrow morning. On Sky Sports, the World Cup hasn't been a great sporting event yet, but it has provided a fascinating parallel universe of political intrigue and culture-shocks, especially Kenya's drubbing of West Indies. But there has been nothing at all to watch on our terrestrial networks. Armageddon in TV sports coverage creeps closer.

But hey, our top TV technocrats can still churn out a fine whodunit. ITV's latest Ruth Rendell Mystery is *The Secret House Of Death*, starring perpetually panic-stricken Amanda Redman as a frustrated single mother living on a pricey but claustrophobic housing estate, and getting unwisely embroiled with next-door neighbours Bob and Louise. When she finds Louise hideously dead, her descent into nightmare begins. . . Rendell's gift is her ability to cloak whopping genre clichés in minutely observed trappings of middle-class conformity. It works every time, nearly.

OPERA

Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci Cardiff

THE WELSH National Opera is celebrating its golden jubilee with the twin Italian operas by Mascagni and Leoncavallo that launched the company in 1946. The double bill is a showcase for the best Welsh tenor of the day — Dennis O'Neill, doubling as Turiddu and Canio.

The stagings by Elijah Moshinsky with Michael Yeargan's designs are conventional. For *Cavalleria Rusticana*, we have pretty village pictures not going anywhere, a homage to the narrative conservatism of a John Copley or Zeffirelli that doesn't focus the acting at all. Pagliacci, musically the more distinctive work, gets a less cynical response from Moshinsky. There are more clowns than usual and large crowds of interested audience milling around. The lighting is dramatic, the basic set a dusty featureless yard. The passions attempt Anna Magnani-like conviction but the denouement is guddled and unsubtle.

Canio's revenge seems sordid and petty rather than metaphysically consequent. Moshinsky's Welsh staging is a good, solid account of what most people expect to see in this highly theatrical pairing. But he never breaks through into a level of genuine excitement. Canio Rizzoli's rather self-satisfied conducting was a handicap, too heavy and, of course, and the WNO orchestra had slippish moments.

O'Neill had about two lines of pleasing mezza voce but mostly belted with a good sense of style and an increasingly welcome ring in his timbre. A better director would have pushed him further.

Anne-Marie Owens made a powerful Santuzza with thrilling higher register. But her emotion-laden responses seemed generalised rather than specially apt. Peter Sidhom was a formidable Alfio, his resentment snarling and invasive. The most credible performers were Rosalind Sutherland's plump persuasive Nedda, singing with a soft-edged bell-like sweetness, and Jason Howard's robust, compulsive, handsome Silvio.

At the Bristol Hippodrome on March 12 and 15; Covent Garden, March 20 and 22, then touring.

POP

Michael Bolton Wembley Arena

THE last time Michael Bolton played Wembley, there were so few men there that the gents' toilets were opened to the ladies. This time, on the first of two sold-out nights, there were more males around, presumably to keep a wary eye on pop's most unlikely sex god.

Unlikely is definitely the word. Bolton is not just 40-ish and blow-dried of coiffure, he is also — to go by this show — the least sexy creature ever to steamroll through a love song. In fairness to the lounge-suited American, he never set out to be Rod Stewart, and such expectations fluster him. He barely glanced at the young woman he pulled onstage during an aria from *Pagliacci* (yes, Mike sings opera too). He plainly sees the sex symbol business as a pesky distraction from his real vocation, emoting MOR ballads by the yard. And considering the utter lack of subtlety of his booming voice, one wonders why women do find him so attractive.

Perhaps it's because virtu-

ally every number has the word "love" in its title. When *A Man Loves A Woman*, *Love Is A Wonderful Thing*, *Love Somebody* — he did 'em all, and how we swooned when he held notes for minutes at a time. If there was a singing Olympics, Bolton would walk away with gold.

Not only that, if there was a category for *Brashest Would-Be Soul Group*, the backing band would also be in for a medal. They provide the horsepower without sharing in the glory; in retribution, they pump up every note as if it's the last they'll ever play. One unforgettable number had the guitarist actually playing two instruments together — one around his neck, the other propped on a stand. Rock 'n' roll!

The set was divided between Bolton originals and Bolton's beloved sixties soul covers, all linked by the belief that more is more. Inexplicably, this approach has helped to sell 40 million records, and also attracted the patronage of Luciano Pavarotti, with whom he once duetted. That figure, when you think about it — who else could make the maestro seem delicate?

Caroline Sullivan

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'I may be able to found the Jewish state without any firm support'

The state that was to become Israel was envisioned 100 years ago. DAVID GOLDBERG remembers its motive force, Theodor Herzl

A SLIM volume entitled Der Judenstaat - The Jewish State - was published in Vienna 100 years ago. Its author was Dr Theodor Herzl, a successful journalist, unsuccessful playwright, elegant man-about-town and assimilated Jew. His thesis was simple: there was a compelling need to provide the Jews with a state of their own.

The idea was not new. Already by 1882, Moses Hess, a quixotic collaborator of Marx and Engels, had argued in Rome and Jerusalem that anti-Semitism was endemic in liberal countries and could only be cured by re-establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

By the time of Herzl's 1896 pamphlet, a movement - of sorts - already existed to provide a Jewish homeland. But it was Herzl who through force of personality and compulsive energy transformed Zionism into a coherent national movement, who took under its umbrella all the disparate philanthropic, humanitarian, religious and political tendencies that were attempting to restore Zion, who acted as the bridge-builder between western and eastern Jewry, who gave to the nascent Zionist organisation its sense of purpose, and to the watching world an impression of seriousness and credibility.

Herzl was born in 1860, the same year as Anton Chekhov, and died in 1904, also the same year as the great Russian writer. There is a certain similarity in their handsome, melancholy features, the intimation, perhaps, of premature death.

Strangely, Herzl's talents were, essentially, theatrical. Whether as dandy, aesthete, journalist or statesman-in-waiting, Herzl adapted to his role with the easy charm of a Herby's febrile imagination. He knew better than anyone that his grand design was a confidence trickster's bluff. "The earth floats in mid-air. Similarly, I may be able to found and stabilise the Jewish state without any firm support. The secret lies in motion," he confided to his diary. A precursor of the twentieth century in his awareness of publicity and public relations, he coaxed and inveigled Zionism into the forefront of public attention.

In the end, it was his ignorance of Jewish history and the millennial yearning for Zion that would prove his undoing. Desperate to find any haven for the Jewish masses after the 1903 Kishinev pogrom he urged the sixth Zionist Congress to pursue Chamberlain's offer of a protectorate in East Africa.

Many delegates turned on their uncrowned king in betrayed outrage. Leon Trotsky, watching the tumult from the press gallery, predicted the inevitable collapse of the Zionist movement. A semblance of unity was eventually restored, but at the cost of Herzl's frail health. He died 11 months later, prompting an effusion of grief throughout the Jewish world.

Like only a handful of others in history, Herzl had transcended the none-too-flattering details of his private life to take on a mythic resonance as the personification of his people: another Moses not privileged to enter the Promised Land, but whose enduring epitaph would be his uncanny accurate prophecy after the first Zionist Congress in 1897: "At Basel I founded the Jewish state. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered with universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in 50, everyone will know it." David J Goldberg is Senior Rabbi of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London. His new book, To the Promised Land: A History of Zionist Thought, will be published by Viking/Penguin.

larly controlled and effort- less. The poorest Jews would go first, to lay the foundations, followed by entrepreneurial settlers and then the middle classes. Government of the new-found land would be by a limited monarchy or an aristocratic republic. As to its location, Herzl leaves the options open. The vast open spaces and temperate climate of Argentina were attractive, but on the other hand, Palestine is "our unforgettable historic homeland". Furthermore, were the Sultan to cede Palestine to the Jews, they would undertake competent management of Turkey's chaotic finances and become "an outpost of civilisation against barbarism".

At the time, Der Judenstaat created only a minor stir. But as a journalist Herzl knew how to "plant" stories that took on a life of their own. Within 18 months he would have wheeled his way into the Ottoman court and masterminded his most spectacular coup de théâtre, the first Zionist Congress in Basel.

Subsequently he would obtain audiences with the Kaiser, the Sultan, the Pope, Joseph Chamberlain the British Colonial Secretary, and numerous powerful statesmen and influential magnates, laying before them his scheme, which varied according to whom he was talking. To the Germans, he implied that the proposed Jewish territory would become an outpost of Berlin; to the British, that it would seek colonial status; to the Turks, that Jewish capital would alleviate their perilous economic situation; to the Jewish bankers, that it only required their loans for everything to fall into place.

There was no consistent strategy at work; simply Herzl's febrile imagination. He knew better than anyone that his grand design was a confidence trickster's bluff. "The earth floats in mid-air. Similarly, I may be able to found and stabilise the Jewish state without any firm support. The secret lies in motion," he confided to his diary. A precursor of the twentieth century in his awareness of publicity and public relations, he coaxed and inveigled Zionism into the forefront of public attention.

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Photograph: ABBAS/MAGNUM

In a family embrace

Al Qahira, Cairo's Inner City, is a planner's nightmare. But JAN MORRIS believes they should think twice before changing it

AS I WALKED through the Bab Zuweila, below the dreadful objects of iron and chain which are, I take it, remnants of the time when this was the place of public executions, past the nail-studded gate behind which the long-dead levity saint El Mutwalli attends the supplications of the faithful - as I entered the capital of the Fatimid Caliphs it occurred to me that the Inner City, over which western urban theorists writing their hands so helplessly, is decidedly alive and well in Cairo.

Al Qahira, "The Victorious" since it was founded in the tenth century. City walls surround part of its square mile or so, and it still feels quite separate from the metropolis which has grown up around it. It is a tumultuous jumble of tenements, bazaars, mosques, cramped squares and narrow alleys: congested, crumbled, not very hygienic, with extremely poor housing and appalling pressures of traffic, and general huffer-muggardom. In short, our western improvers would hate it. The health hazards! The safety hazard! The lack of zoning! The noise! The streets! The almost certain absence of qualified Counsellors, Sociologists and Planning Officers! But I think that within the medieval gates of this quarter one can discover almost all the qualities that an inner city ought to have - all but expunged in the west by the dogmatic reforms of Experts.

I suspect the greatest architectural visionaries, the Corbusiers or Lloyd Wrights, might be on my side. Like Venice, Al Qahira has an elegant simplicity of design which makes for clarity of purpose. It was conceived as a fortified palace compound: the palaces have vanished, but the rectangular ground plan remains much as it was when the Caliph's Moroccan astrologers declared it propitious in 969 AD.

Among the tangled maze of alleys a single main artery passes, with several changes of name. It runs from Bab Zuweila to Bab Futuh, from the southern gate to the northern, following an immemorial caravan route to the Red Sea. This was always the principal street of Grand Cairo, one of the great thoroughfares of the world, certainly one of the most resilient, and the true locale of the Thousand and One Nights - ostensibly set in Baghdad but really a reflection of this tremendous oriental capital.

Above the street stands the great bazaar quarter, Khan el Khalil, as magnetic a focus for tourists today as it was seven centuries ago for the turbaned merchants of the eastern world - still gleaming, certainly, with gold and silver, rich with carpets, sickly with perfumes and cluttered with souvenirs and gaudily and alluring. It forms a compact if labyrinthine quarter of its own: the medieval equivalent of a mall, and the well-defined focus of commercial life in the city.

And nearby is the locus of intellectual and religious life - coterminous in medieval Islam, and to some degree in modern Islam too. In a commanding situation more or less in the centre stands the great mosque-university of Al Azhar, "The Resplendent" which has been for 1,000 years the academic centre of all Islam. It has been vastly extended into an adjacent campus, and into a campus outside the medieval city, but it is still the symbolic and topographical apex of Al Qahira.

The focus, then, is explicit: the one main highway linking every quarter with the centres of spiritual and temporal life, the whole contained within recognisable limits and given unity by the sanction of history. All around, in lanes and alleys and little squares, in buildings old and new, comfortable and appalling, the people of the city live. Ah, the western planners would say, but think of the squalor, the confusion, the jam-packed traffic of cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, donkeys, horses, herds of goats - men with baskets of ducks on their backs, street vendors, impertinent urchins, jolly smiling women, wandering mendicants - the rubbish, the crumbling walls, the piles of onions by the Bab Futuh!

It is precisely true that the moment you enter Bab Zuweila the full tide of human life overwhelms you with its torrent of flossam and jetsam. Colour, push, vivacity, greed, torpor, sudden anger, flirtation, reconciliation, resignation, humour - it is all there, all around you, out in the open.

What might ruin Al Qahira would be the application of trendy western planning principles to its ancient web - the broadening of lanes, the opening-up of spaces, the pedestrianisation of that chaotic main street, which would at a single stroke destroy both the functionalism and the fascination of the place. But short of mass demolition, even the most progressive reforms would probably fail in Al Qahira. For one thing the cars and the donkeys would soon be back among the bollards and pretty benches of the pedestrian street; but much more importantly, the spirit of the place itself proves indestructible.

Al Qahira possesses one urban element which western planners do not often have to bother about: the immensely potent force of a belief. Even patriotism, that last degraded

ament, exchanging casual greetings all the way, meeting friends here and there, shooed away by stall-keepers sometimes, eating a mandarin, dropping the peel and carrying in his hand a plastic container containing a pair of large and vicious-looking insects.

Far from thinking what squalors and perils surrounded him, I thought what a marvellous place it was to grow up in, with all the passionate variety of human existence displayed so intimately and so frankly, every step of the way. The great Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz did grow up here, and in his most famous book, Midaq Alley, evoked a glorious cast of Al Qahira characters - the rogues, the sentimentalists, the pious, the profane, the girl who ran away to be a downtown prostitute, the matchmaker, the quack, the man who made his living muti-

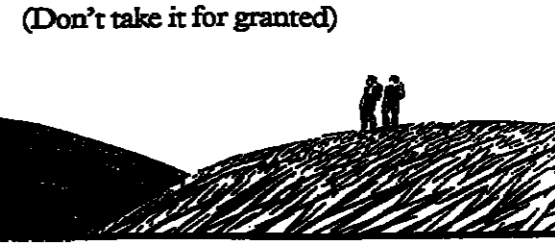
ating people to make their begging more profitable. His eponymous Midaq Alley still exists, in the heart of the place, and it pleased me to imagine that the schoolboy with his rucksack was a novelist in embryo too, already working up his material. For the first merit of this Inner City is the scale of it. Nothing is too big, nothing is too far. The great central bazaar is fair share of family scandals and disgraces, its black sheep away in prison, its drug addicts, its lechers and its snobs. But the children who grow up in Al Qahira grow up among friends, wandering the city without fear, cheeky enough but innately polite, and infinitely better balanced, or so it seems to me, than children of our western streets; and strangers too, the moment they step into this ancient hubbub, feel themselves to be guests.

Life in all its complexity rages, laughs, plays and asks for exorbitant prices on every corner of Al Qahira, but the grand and fundamental order that lies behind is betrayed in the neighbourly patterns of the city, the courtesy of its streets, the tall and lovely minarets piercing the blue above: and that, to my mind, is what the Inner City should be like.

Jan Morris 1996

The full tide of human life is all there, all around you: street scene in Al Qahira, sketched by Jan Morris

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20 OBITUARIES

Jacobo Majluta

A glimpse of power without the glory

JACOBO Majluta, who has died of cancer aged 61, was a political strongman or caudillo of the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately for him, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean nation boasted a number of stronger strongmen. Thus, for all but 42 days — when Majluta was a stand-in president at the end of a notoriously corrupt administration — his driving ambition was frustrated by more powerful men.

His first taste of the fruits of power came when he was given control of the nation's chocolate industry under the murderous, near-totalitarian regime of Rafael Trujillo. Following Trujillo's assassination in 1961, Majluta joined the opposition Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). He rose fast, becoming finance minister in the nation's first truly democratic administration, Juan Bosch's 1963 government, which was over-

thrown by a military coup after seven months. Majluta was imprisoned briefly before being exiled. He was elected the republic's vice-president in 1978 under the PRD's Antonio Guzmán, but found himself to the right of most of his colleagues. He combined his state office with the presidency of Corde, a massive public sector corporation. The post carried ample scope for enrichment and Majluta was frequently accused of corruption, although charges were never formally substantiated.

The high point of his career came in 1982. The alcoholic but honest Antonio Guzmán shot himself after uncovering corruption in his inner circle. As vice-president Majluta took over for 42 days until the president-elect assumed office. This was the one taste of the power after which Majluta was expelled from the party in 1987. The expulsion was subsequently annulled by the central electoral council, but in 1989 Majluta broke entirely with the PRD and founded the Independent Revolutionary Party (PRI). This existed solely to promote Majluta's personal ambitions, which were by now wholly unrealistic. But it did take enough PRD voters to lose Peña Gómez elections in 1990 and 1994 and allow the disastrous Balaguer presidency to drag on far beyond its natural life.

His most bitter battles were with PRD rivals. Having failed to secure his party's 1982 presidential nomination he immediately began campaigning for 1986, building his own structure within the PRD and using his position as the senate's president to carry favour with the right by blocking the PRD's progressive legislation. That campaign split the PRD. His supporters clashed with those of his main rival, José Francisco Peña Gómez. After a violent campaign in which activists from both camps were killed, Majluta won the PRD's nomination. It was a pyrrhic victory. So many PRD supporters had been alienated that Majluta lost out to a 78-year-old former dictator — the blind and incontinent Joaquín Balaguer.

Peña Gómez recaptured control of the PRD following that defeat, and Majluta was expelled from the party in 1987. The expulsion was subsequently annulled by the central electoral council, but in 1989 Majluta broke entirely with the PRD and founded the Independent Revolutionary Party (PRI). This existed solely to promote Majluta's personal ambitions, which were by now wholly unrealistic. But it did take enough PRD voters to lose Peña Gómez elections in 1990 and 1994 and allow the disastrous Balaguer presidency to drag on far beyond its natural life.

After being diagnosed with lung cancer, Majluta sought a political reconciliation with the PRD and even endorsed Peña Gómez's aspirations to the presidency. To many this last act of political generosity was inexplicably at odds with Majluta's otherwise cynical and destructive political career.

James Hodges

Jacobo Majluta Azar, politician, born October 8, 1934; died March 2, 1996



Gesture politics... Majluta on the hustings in 1986

Rear-Admiral John Grant

Fiery spirit in the Arctic ice

REAR-ADMIRAL John Grant, who has died aged 87, was the last British admiral to fly his flag in a battleship. But as one of very few officers to have undergone anti-submarine training before 1939, it was in that branch of warfare that he made his name.

The war at sea was at its harshest on the convoy run between Iceland and northern Russia, where Grant commanded the destroyer HMS Beverley. The main natural threat to ships was the ice which formed on the upperworks, capable of overturning smaller vessels unless constantly hacked off. In addition to the threat from U-boats, convoys on the Murmansk route faced Norwegian based Luftwaffe aircraft and surface warships, including the superbattleship Tirpitz.

The second eastbound convoy left Murmansk at the end of April 1942. The escort was led by the cruiser Edinburgh and included Grant's Beverley, which had been a US Navy first world war destroyer. With four funnels it looked old-fashioned but had great strength and endurance. Three more destroyers and four minesweepers completed the close escort. On April 30 the Edinburgh was torpedoed by a U-boat 250 miles out and turned back to Murmansk. Next, three German fleet destroyers, with guns much heavier than those of their British equivalents, attacked. The minesweepers escorted the limping Edinburgh, while the British destroyers repeatedly beat off their stronger enemy. Just one Soviet merchantman was sunk and one escort damaged when the German fleet retired after five passes at the convoy. But on May 2

they located the Edinburgh, which sank one of them but was hit by a third torpedo. The cruiser had to be sunk by her own side, taking a large Russian gold consignment with her. Grant, redheaded, with matching fiery temperament, was awarded the DSO for his part in the defence.

John Grant was the first male in his family not to join the Army. He went to Dartmouth at 14 as a cadet in 1922, joining the battleship Queen Elizabeth as a midshipman of 17. As a lieutenant he was sent to HMS Osprey, the anti-submarine warfare school, to learn what was then a seriously underrated skill.

In September 1941 Grant was given command of the Beverley with her mixed British, Free French and Polish crew, including the transatlantic route and sinking one U-boat before switching to the Russian convoys. In 1942 he was back at Osprey in a training role; a year later he joined the operational staff of Western Approaches command. Postwar commands of a destroyer and a cruiser were followed by a shore posting as a captain and head of HMS Vernon, the torpedo school. Grant's last appointment was as Flag Officer Commanding the Reserve Fleet, which he did from Britain's last and largest battleship, HMS Vanguard, completed in 1946 and scrapped soon after he left the service in 1960 with the CB. He enjoyed ten years in electronics, becoming director of the Conference of the Electronics Industry.

Dan Van Der Vort

Rear-Admiral John Grant, born October 13, 1908; died February 29, 1996

Bentley Bridgewater

Trusty at the museum

THE BRITISH Museum was a very different institution when Bentley Bridgewater became secretary in 1948 to what it was when he retired in 1973. The director's office had only established a filing system two years before and the director, Sir John Forsdyke, encouraged the use of the telephone to avoid needless accumulation of paper. Most of the Museum's business was conducted on a personal basis, requiring tact and persuasion — qualities Bridgewater, who had died aged 84, possessed to a remarkable degree.

Born in Vancouver, he was brought to England by his mother during the first world war. After Westminster School he read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Christ Church, Oxford. He was a talented pianist and linguist, and was coached unsuccessfully for the Diplomatic Service by Sir Frank Fraser, the Director after 1959, who had little patience with Bridgewater's informal style but who in 1961 had acquired enough respect to get his post of Secretary. Another development, two years later, was the abolition of the old Board of Trustees and with it the disappearance of long-serving members dedicated to the well-being of the Museum and as knowledgeable as its staff.

The new Assistant Director appointed in 1968 had a scientific rather than arts background and could handle statistics, but he too came to appreciate Bridgewater's strengths. Bentley was retained by the Museum to the age of 65, as he had hoped, but his fourth and last Director, Sir John Wolfenden, pointed out that had he stayed his next boss would probably have been Sir John Pope-Hennessy. It was consolation of a kind that he had often dispensed to others, and no less effective.



Bridgewater... resourceful

used by Forsdyke and his successor, Sir Thomas Kendrick, he became a friend of the Kendrick family. They noticed his foibles and on occasion made that clear. But they recognised the intelligence that enabled him to dictate a long and complex draft in virtually its final form, and the diplomacy with which he dealt with sometimes difficult keepers, who, though highly qualified in their fields, lacked administrative experience. Bridgewater knew how to reassure, turn away wrath, smooth rivalries and build bridges with the Trustees, with many of whom he was on excellent terms.

As time went on a variety of changes altered his position, making it difficult. He was good at keeping up the morale of his staff when everyone was under pressure, and once remarked that there was no reason why work should not be fun. There was not much to say about Sir Frank Fraser, the Director after 1959, who had little patience with Bridgewater's informal style but who in 1961 had acquired enough respect to get his post of Secretary. Another development, two years later, was the abolition of the old Board of Trustees and with it the disappearance of long-serving members dedicated to the well-being of the Museum and as knowledgeable as its staff.

The new Assistant Director appointed in 1968 had a scientific rather than arts background and could handle statistics, but he too came to appreciate Bridgewater's strengths. Bentley was retained by the Museum to the age of 65, as he had hoped, but his fourth and last Director, Sir John Wolfenden, pointed out that had he stayed his next boss would probably have been Sir John Pope-Hennessy. It was consolation of a kind that he had often dispensed to others, and no less effective.

Philip Harris and Oliver Neighbour

Bentley Bridgewater, secretary of the British Museum, born September 6, 1911; died February 17, 1996

Margaret Courtenay

Saving the day, and the play

WITH the death of Margaret Courtenay aged 72 the theatre has lost one of its most popular and colourful personalities. Born in Cardiff she was the daughter of a talented amateur actress and started broadcasting while still at school. There was a break during the war when she served in the ATS, but otherwise Margaret (Maggie to her friends) was rarely out of the theatre or studio.

Her long career encompassed everything from Shakespeare to farce and musicals. Possessed of an imposing presence and a beautiful voice she was compelling in any role and was recognised as a valuable addition to any company with which she appeared — in fact she was a notorious scene stealer and

salvaged many a play with her wit and brilliant comedy timing. There were early days with Old Vic companies in London and on extensive foreign tours when she played Goneril, Gertrude and Lady Capulet; much later, when she had established herself as a mistress of commanding characters, came Mistress Quickly, Juliet's nurse and other parts demanding that special benevolent bullying which she was adept at portraying. But there were other plays in which she was required to be less formal and more charming. She had a knack of seeming to be everywhere, and she had a gift of bringing enjoyment with her. Her loyalty to and affection for her friends was unquestioning — as was her devotion to her mother, who predeceased

her by only a few weeks at the age of 105. Her acceptance of her illness was cheerful and altogether admirable. The lady never lacked courage and was working on various projects until the very last weeks. Her final performance was as the Countess in a radio production of A Little Night Music when she was quite magical. On stage, in 1938, she was memorable as Lady Hayling in a revival of Coward's Relative Values, a part she made her own. She is survived by her son Julian — the only child of her marriage (later dissolved) to Ivan Pinfield.

Of Junoesque proportions she had great style and elegance, and her arrival at any party (and she arrived at most parties) was managed with splendid effect. She had a knack of seeming to be everywhere, and she had a gift of bringing enjoyment with her. Her loyalty to and affection for her friends was unquestioning — as was her devotion to her mother, who predeceased

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Frank Middlemass and Geoffrey Toone

Margaret Courtenay, actress, born November 14, 1923; died February 15, 1996



Commanding performance... Courtenay with Anthony Quayle in The Rivals at the Old Vic in 1978 PHOTOGRAPH: PETER JONES

Weekend Birthdays

IS IT a sign of age when it seems that Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police are getting younger? Sir Paul Condon is almost half way through his seven year stretch in the country's top policing job and is still only 49 tomorrow. He may feel that the job, which he took on in 1984, has already aged him a few extra years; he raised his eyebrows when he suggested last summer that the majority of young street robbers were black and some of his own more traditional officers are unhappy at some of the changes he has introduced. But his term so far has been, on balance, successful: crime falling, stout words on equality, an unaccommodated frankness in debate and a movement of officers away from the desks and on to the streets. The Bourne-mouth-born Sir Paul has come far since his first posting at Bethnal Green in east London. One of a generation of bright, ambitious officers, he was sent on a police scholarship to St Peter's College, Oxford, where he studied jurisprudence. This has stood him in good stead over the last couple of years as he walks the tightrope between a demanding London public and media and a world-weary service. He recently suggested that there was probably more racism within journalism and the print than within the police. — DC

Today's birthdays: Andrew Bennett, Labour MP, 57; Juliette Binoche, French actress, 32; André Courrèges, couturier, 73; Neil Hamilton MP, former Conservative minister, 47; David Matthews, composer, 53; Howard Shiley, concert pianist and conductor, 46; Mickey Spillane, novelist, 78; Keely Smith, jazz singer, 64; David

Willetts, Conservative MP, 40.

Tomorrow's other birthdays: Prince Edward, 32; Kim Campbell, former prime minister of Canada, 48; Garth Crooks, footballer, 38; Lady (Marcia) Falkender, 64; Terry Holmes, rugby player, 39; Graeme Ogden, chairman, Monopolies and Mergers Commission, 62; Andrew Parrott, conductor, 49; Fou Ts'ong, pianist, 62.

Death Notices

THOMPSON, Pat of Harlow, who died of cancer on 28th of February, is to be cremated on Tuesday 12th of March at 11pm in Harlow, instead of 10.30 as advertised. If you give donations to a hospice and place them in remembrance of Pat, Funeral by Green Underings of Waltham.

In Memoriam

CHILD, Anne, died 3.9.94. Loved and remembered by Frances. NERVE ANAESTHETIC CLERGY. A Memorial Service for Hugh Goss will be held at 11.00 am on Saturday 10th March in the Hatfield College, Hatfield. Those attending are asked to inform the Warden's Secretary, Tel: 01825 52022.

Births

PETER GIBSON AND GLADIA MATHIAS are pleased to announce the birth of their first daughter Ellen Rachel Gibson on 28th February 1996.
 0171-611 9500 or 0161-824 8588

USE WILL POWER TO CHEAT DEATH. We do kidney research saves lives. Do no legends. NATIONAL KIDNEY RESEARCH FUND. 3 Archers Court, Stanbury Road, Harrogate. Cambridgeshire FE10 6XG. Telephone 01430 45822. Registered Charity No. 252222.

Face to Faith

Church without the Crown?

Madeleine Bunting

NEWSPAPERS seldom bring good news for the Prince of Wales and this week's Guardian poll was no exception. Only 25 per cent thought he should still become king and head of the Church of England, while 45 per cent thought he shouldn't be either. Until now Lambeth has been able to enunciate a clear line — Charles, divorced or not, is entitled to succeed to the throne and by implication to head the Church.

The all-important and deeply sensitive issue is whether Prince Charles chooses to renounce. Hence the Archbishop of Canterbury's unprecedented step of taking a complaint — which was upheld this week — to the Press Complaints Commission over a story in the Sunday Times recently which claimed that he was "ready and prepared to bless a union

between the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker-Bowles". Increasingly the Church is going to find itself centre stage in the escalating royal crisis — and in an exasperating dilemma. At present, the Church will not re-marry divorcées. The Church faces three possible options: Prince Charles continues — more or less secretly — his relationship with Camilla, without marrying her; Prince Charles has a civil marriage outside the Church; or the Church changes its stance on re-marriage.

After the Archbishop of Canterbury's stern back to basics speech on marriage and family life in General Synod last November, all three look equally implausible. Dr George Carey was unequivocal about the primacy of marriage over cohabitation: how then could the Church accept a head in a long-term extra-marital relationship, or relax its policy on re-marriage?

What appears to loom increasingly on the horizon is the dissolution of the link between Crown and Church. Prince Charles's own behaviour has done little to ward this off. He has shown considerable ambivalence about Christianity. With his affection for Laurens Van der Post-style mysticism and love of nature, he has clearly shown he has reservations about the exclusive claims of Christianity — like the majority of his generation.

With the extraordinary sense of timing for which Princess Diana has become famous, she announced her agreement to a divorce on the day that her husband visited the Hindu temple in Neasden, north London. In the front page photographs, Prince Charles is wearing garlands and a dot on his forehead. It was a vivid reminder of the speech he had made only a few weeks earlier which was widely interpreted (not entirely accurately) as a call for more

temples and mosques to be built for the millennium. Not to mention the bombshell he dropped in his interview with Jonathan Dimbleby that he wanted to be defender of faiths.

The Queen is a sincere Christian; her Christmas Day broadcasts carry more and more religious baggage, as last year's reference to an Irish nun vividly demonstrated. The quaint ceremonies which symbolise her position as head of the Church such as the State Opening of Synod have an authenticity which it is hard to see her son achieving.

Removing the monarch as head of the Church would be a relatively straightforward matter requiring only an act of synod, assured a senior Church figure this week. But it would be an earthquake in the psychology of the Church, as was illustrated in a lengthy article in this week's Church Times. It argued that the moral fitness of the Supreme Governor for his job has not been relevant in the past; occupants have included two Lutherals (George I and II), a Roman Catholic (James II), a divorcée (Henry VIII), and a practising homosexual (James I). But a secular culture has ex-

acting standards of how institutions should reflect their ideals and puts the Church under continual pressure to match up to what it preaches. It is ludicrous to suggest that a monarch in the 20th century can do something because his 15th-century forbear did it.

Without underestimating the enormous upheaval of removing the Crown as the head of the Church and the blow to Prince

Charles's prestige, there are some clear advantages. The Prince would be freed up to be a more neutral arbiter in a multi-faith Britain. As Islam's followers grow to more than a million in this country and the Hindu community expands, such a role could be vital; an extension of the monarchy's traditional importance in binding the nationalities of the United Kingdom.

For the Church also there are potential benefits. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the late 20th century is the profound suspicion of authority. This represents one of the most serious challenges to the traditionally hierarchical structures of the Christian churches.

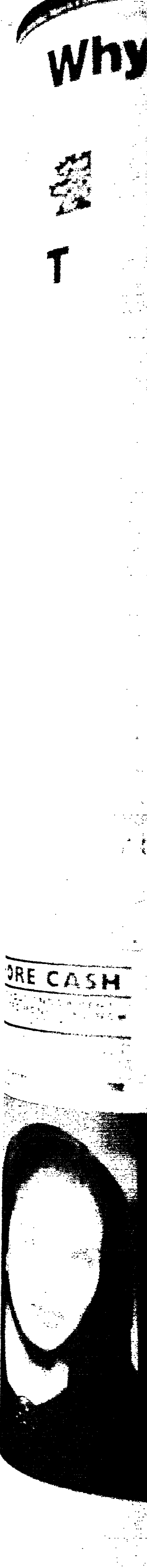
The recent debate in synod on bishops' pay was a fascinating example of how the pres-

sure is mounting within the Church for a flatter, more egalitarian organisation. In that context, one can see the potential popularity of the Church cutting its links with an institution which epitomises more than any other the hierarchy of social class.

Madeleine Bunting is the Guardian's Religious Affairs Editor

Doonesbury

Cartoon strip by Garry Trudeau. Panel 1: 'ONE LAST POINT, MR. ROTH-FIELD: YOU MEDIA CABALISTS CAN RAIL ALL YOU WANT, BUT THE BUCCHANAN MOVEMENT CANNOT BE DENIED!' Panel 2: 'PAT'S REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN REACHED OUT TO BEFORE. HE'S EMPHATICALLY THE FORMERLY POWERLESS, AND THEY LONG FOR HIM FOR IT!' Panel 3: 'DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU BRING TOGETHER EVERY PROTECTIONIST, ISOLATIONIST, ULTRANATIONALIST, SEGREGATIONIST, ANTI-SUBSIDIARIZATIONIST, WHITE SUPREMACIST IN THE COUNTRY?' Panel 4: 'A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS... PROBABLY... BUT MAYBE... JUST MAYBE... AN EIGHT-YEAR REICH!'



Taken for a ride by ticket agents

CHIFF JONES

TICKET agents are deliberately misleading consumers into paying too much for their tickets. But the surcharge added by agencies and box offices can be avoided, or at least minimised, by shopping around.

Fans of Lou Reed who want to see him at Wembley Arena in May can buy their tickets at the venue for their face value of £20. Ticket agent Ticketmaster charges a £3 booking fee per ticket on top of the ticket price. Stargreen, another large agency, is charging a £3.50 booking fee and HMV, whose ticket sales are handled by Ticketmaster, is also charging £3.

First Call was the most straightforward about its prices, because its sales staff quoted the face value separately from the booking fee. The worst offender was Ticketron, which said that tickets cost £25. A saleswoman claimed that 240 would buy a seat five rows from the stage. She explained that the company had paid more for its tickets because the concert was sold out.

But Wembley Arena box office confirmed that "there were plenty of good seats still available". Ticketron is described by trade officials and fixed-price agencies as an "indoor tout". Its staff says the agency charges a fixed fee on each ticket sold to it by the venue. However, both the concert promoters and Wembley Arena's box office said the most expensive tickets for the London show would be £20 and not, as stated by Ticketron, £25 before the £5 booking fee.

Ticketron bills itself as "specialists in sold-out events", possibly because its own tickets are the last to be sold because of the extortionate prices. Lou Reed's four promoters, MCP, were shocked at Ticketron's tactics and a spokesman said "we wouldn't dream of dealing with people like that".

David Marshall, a spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry, said Ticketron's sales pitch was in breach of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. It has been a legal requirement since February 1995 for the seller to disclose the face value shown on a ticket. Touts such as Ticketron can be prosecuted under the Price Indications Resale of Tickets regulations for not disclosing the face value of its tickets when asked for the ticket price and for misleading potential customers.

The first case to be brought to court under the new act, against agents Covent Garden Tickets Limited, was heard yesterday. Director Stuart Cohen pleaded guilty to the charges of mis-describing seats and not disclosing the face value of tickets. Mr Cohen was fined £100 on each of the eight charges against him and ordered to pay £4,528 costs.

Analysts in Hong Kong have already taken next year's link to China into account and the markets remain largely optimistic

Why the tigers still burn bright

ROGER COWE finds all is calm as handover nears

THE optimism of the investment community in Hong Kong can seem myopic, as though if enough people say often enough that everything will be all right, then it will be. But from a stock market point of view, this is not as crazy as it might seem.

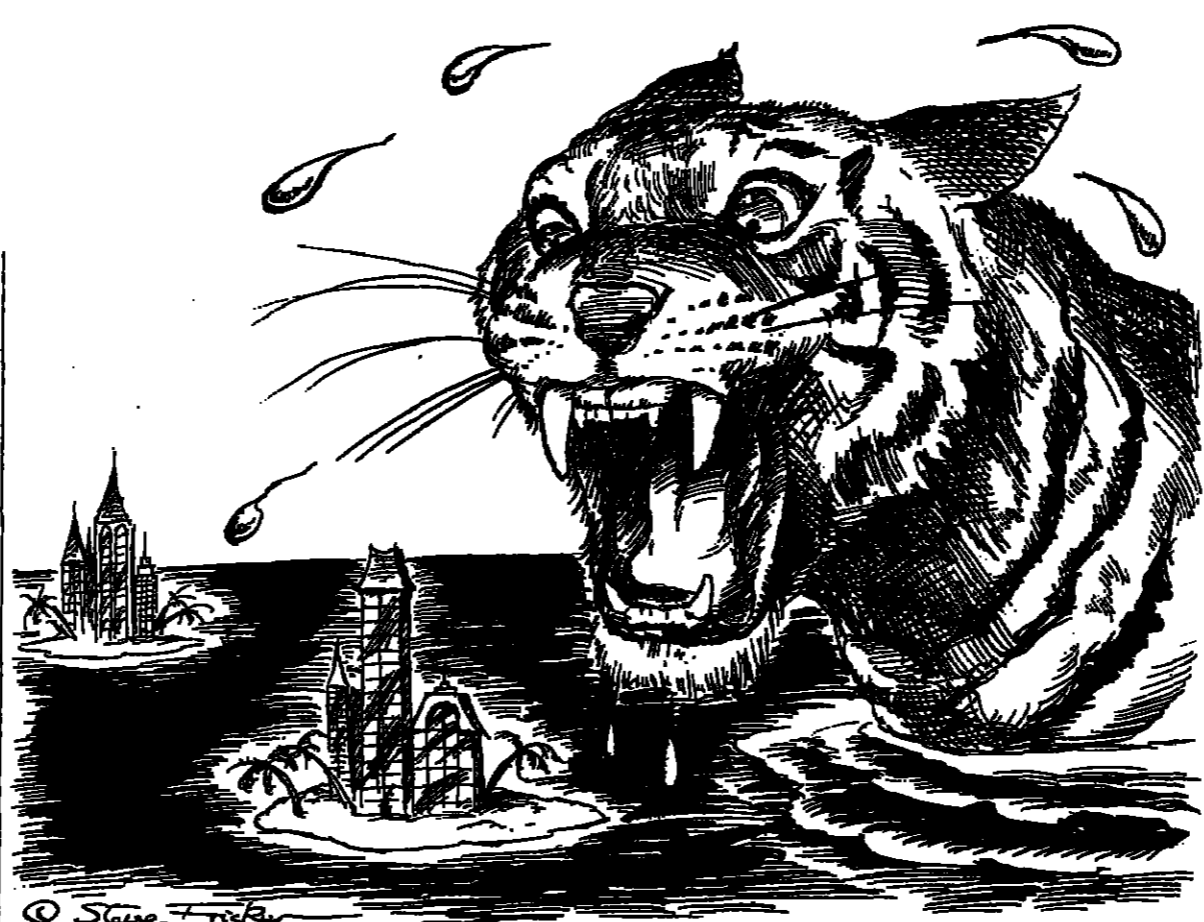
Stock markets generally look ahead, with prices taking into account expectations about future political and economic circumstances, including next year's handover to China. As Schroders' director David Lui said: "It is not an issue that has come as a surprise. We have known it was going to happen for long enough."

The volatility which an uncertain future brings to the so-called tiger economies was illustrated this week when Hong Kong's main stock market index, the Hang Seng, slid 260 points, or 2.3 per cent, before recovering somewhat yesterday. Politics is to blame. Worries about Chinese sabre-rattling over Taiwan overcame a well-received Hong Kong budget, which might normally have been expected to pull up Asian markets.

But, considering the danger of the Chinese missile-testing in the Taiwan Straits escalating into a major international row, the stock market falls around Asia were relatively modest. Taiwan's Taipei stock market naturally suffered the most. It fell 62 points on Tuesday, when the missile tests were announced, and a further 67 points on Wednesday, making a drop of 2.9 per cent over the two days.

However, yesterday the market had already started to recover. Markets beyond what has become known as "greater China" shrugged off the whole affair, perhaps even benefiting to some extent from money switching from Taiwan and Hong Kong. On Tuesday stocks rose in Singapore and Seoul, while there has been little movement in Bangkok.

The lack of panic illustrates the prevailing view here that politics are less important than economics, that the hand-over of Hong Kong to the



Top funds in the Far East, excluding Japan

Unit trusts		Investment trusts	
Five years	£	Five years	£
Gartmore Hong Kong	400.61	INVESCO S & E Asia Gth	789.73
Old Mutual Hong Kong	373.51	Abbey Asian Pacific	780.76
Old Mutual Thailand	371.48	Gartmore Hong Kong	761.62
HSBC Hong Kong Growth	368.75	HSBC Hong Kong Growth	730.25
Fidelity ASEAN	368.37	Baring Eastern	717.22
		Scottish Asian	371.25
		Pacific Assets	361.24
		TR Pacific	347.49
		Gartmore Emerg Pacific	306.12
		Edinburgh Dragon	265.09

Chinese next summer will go smoothly, with Hong Kong gaining more from being closer to China than it might lose.

Some foreign investors are still likely to be nervous, and that could add to short-term volatility, which is already high by the standards of European and US markets. The South-east Asian market index has seen three huge peaks over the past 15 years, in 1980/81, 1986/87 and 1992/94. Mr Lui's analysis suggests a consistent pattern: over-enthusiasm in the early stage of the economic cycle, pushing markets up to unsustainable

levels followed by a plunge, and then in the second half of the cycle more sober growth before turning down again.

Volatility is associated with the rapid development, and greater potential for shocks, in the economies of the region. In some of the region's markets it is also a function of their small scale. The total value of companies on the stock markets in each of Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, is less than £50 billion. Even Hong Kong has a total market capitalisation of little more than £200 billion. Relatively minor decisions by large institutions

can therefore move markets more than they would in the West.

But Cynthia Liu, director of investment services at Hong Kong's biggest fund manager, Jardine Fleming, pointed out that the risk-return matrix has worked. "The risk-adjusted return has been higher than in OECD countries," she said. Despite all the scares in Hong Kong over the past 10 years, the average annual return on equities has been 19 per cent. That compares with a global 13 per cent.

Such figures emphasise the importance of taking a long view, and that, over the long

term, stock markets reflect national economic performance. On that basis, there is cause for continued optimism because the economies of the region are likely to continue growing at a faster rate than OECD countries, driven increasingly by China, the powerhouse of the region.

China is reporting growth hovering around double figures. And with global interest rates falling this year, fuelling economic growth, most markets have already risen quite sharply — the Hang Seng added 15 per cent in the first couple of months.

There are differences from country to country, and all analysts have their own favourites. Mr Lui is particularly keen on Malaysia. Many investors have preferred Indonesia and Thailand, but he believes that underestimates the long-term thinking of the Malaysian government, compared with attempts in the other two countries to short-circuit development with great leaps forward, which can lead to economic and market shocks.

Pay-out bonanza for takeover society members

CHIFF JONES

NATIONAL & Provincial Building Society's voting members will receive at least £500 when it is taken over by Abbey National in August, according to the transfer document

published this week. Savers who have their accounts since December 31, 1993, will be entitled to either £270 in cash or Abbey shares plus an additional cash bonus equal to 7 per cent of their balance.

The percentage is worked out on the lower of the two balances on either April 28, 1995, or the so-called "vesting date" of August 4, 1996. Savers are advised to top up their balance to maximise their pay-out if the balance has dropped since last April. Savers who joined later, but before the cut-off date of April 28 last year, will get Abbey shares worth £500. Non-voting members, including those with less than £100 in their accounts, will get a cash bonus worth 9 per cent of their balance at the end of last year.

Borrowers receive Abbey

Shares worth £500. And N&P borrowers with loans of between £59,999 and £99,999 will see their mortgage interest rate drop to the new Abbey rate of 7.24 per cent, while borrowers of £100,000 or more will see their rate drop to 7.19 per cent if the takeover goes ahead.

However, only 29,000 of N&P's 400,000 borrowers will benefit from a new rate because the smaller Abbey loans will have the same variable rate as the N&P. Fixed-rate deals stay the same.

Members will receive their voting packs next week and these must be returned before April 6. People can vote in person at a special general meeting to be held in Manchester on April 11. Half of all savers must vote for the merger to be approved and three-quarters of

those must vote in favour. A majority of borrowers must also vote in favour before the N&P's business can be transferred. N&P Chairman Lord Shuttleworth says the society's board is "unanimously recommending the proposed transfer".

Given the voting results in previous takeovers and conversions, the board is unlikely to encounter any serious opposition from the society's members. In May last year, Leeds and Halifax members voted in favour of a merger and cash pay-outs by an overwhelming 19 to 1.

N&P will give Abbey shares worth £500 to the estate of savers who died before the vesting date, provided they held more than £100 in a share account on April 28, 1995. In the case of joint accounts, the surviving second-named holder will be

entitled to a windfall, which will be calculated in the same way as a sole account. All 423,000 N&P Visa customers will maintain a free-for-life credit card — although they will be switched to Abbey National's new Visa card which normally charges a £2.50 annual fee. And the interest rate will drop from a 21.4 annual percentage rate to 19.9 APR when their cards are replaced.

Alliance & Leicester says it will produce its conversion document in October, a month before members vote on whether the society should become a bank. The society has so far refused to indicate who will benefit from any windfalls, beyond excluding all Girobank savers. Nor has it revealed the structure of the pay-out package.

The trusts with eastern promise

UNIT and investment trusts are the easiest means for investors to gain exposure to the Far Eastern investment markets, which have produced some top-performing funds, writes Teresa Hunter.

Investors can choose between 75 Far Eastern unit trusts excluding Japan and 38 including Japan. Alternatively, they have a choice of 15 Far Eastern investment trusts excluding Japan, seven including Japan, and 13 single-country trusts.

Over five years, top of the Far Eastern funds including Japan is Govett Pacific Strategy, which is taking part in the Guardian Investment Challenge. Second, third and fourth are funds run by Perpetual, Abtrust and Schroder. These fund managers are all participating in the Challenge and raising substantial funds for children's charity Barnardo's.

However, the funds excluding Japan have produced returns over five years that reflect the down-turn in

that country's economy. An investment of £100 has grown to an average £290.34 — compared with £202.60 for those including Japan in the portfolio — and the contrast is even more marked over 10 years.

Gartmore's Hong Kong turned a £100 investment into £400.81 over five years and is also fourth of all 1,075 unit trusts over the same period. On the investment trust front, TR Far East Income Warrants is top of all investment trusts over five years and second over two. However, this is a more specialised fund than a general Far Eastern fund.

Fleming and Foreign & Colonial, also Guardian Investment Challenge participants, have winning Far Eastern investment trusts in the top five of their sector. Finally, a note of caution. Far Eastern funds can be volatile and are therefore not suitable as a first equity investment. However, every well-spread portfolio should include an element of exposure to the tiger economies.

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22 FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

The Guardian Saturday March 9 1996

Inflation jitters over fall in America's jobless sends markets sliding and overshadows Clarke's cut in UK rates

US fears see shares crash

Mark Tran in New York and Paul Murphy
THE world's financial markets shuddered yesterday after an unexpectedly sharp fall in US unemployment figures...

slicing base rates by another 0.25 per cent to 6 per cent yesterday. But with analysts in the City already expecting a further relaxation of monetary policy...

reported "near-panic" as the 30-year treasury bond lost almost three points, sending the yield on this financial benchmark up to 6.7 per cent.

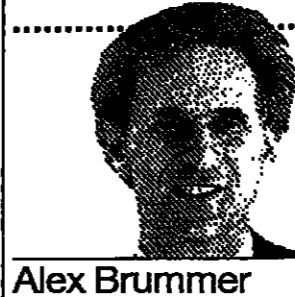
quickly developed that the Federal Reserve, America's central bank, will now leave interest rates unchanged when its policy committee meets again on March 26.

big layoffs for most of 1995 as factories cut back production in the face of excess inventories, saw 26,000 new jobs in February.

may begin to rise quite quickly thereafter. But most share strategists believe that while the British stock market has its own uncertainties to address...

Hong Kong Notebook

All bets are on in unusual takeover



Alex Brummer

JUST how speedily the clock is ticking towards the mainland Chinese takeover of Hong Kong, Britain's most capitalist economy, has been evident over the past week.

this document, however worthless, may help them if life in the new Hong Kong goes really wrong. Chris Patten is seen as achieving a great victory in securing visa-free travel to Britain...

In reality, and in situations when it would count most - visa-free rights on SAR passports would be worthless. For example, if PLA tanks rolled on to the streets of Hong Kong to put down a demonstration...

INDEED, it is Britain's neglect over a long period which has led to just grudging praise of John Major's promise to protect a democratically-elected Legco with every means available.

Slowly but surely, however, the apparatus of the Chinese state could begin to interfere in Hong Kong's commerce and thus undermine confidence.

Compromises will almost certainly have to be made and with each deal there will be an erosion of political, financial and economic freedom.

Lloyd's £2.8bn lifeboat will sink, say Names

Sarah Whitbloom

LOYD'S of London's £2.8 billion lifeboat for loss-stricken investors was last night condemned as doomed to fail by Names, although they have yet to see their individual bills for the insurance market's astronomical losses.

looking for a deal closer to £4.5 billion - have rejected the deal. But he warned that the offer is likely to be scuppered in any event because of US legal problems.

checks into such hardship claims - warned yesterday that Names should apply by the end of April for such assistance since there is only a limited amount of money available.

White Hart falls to Regal hunt

Ian King

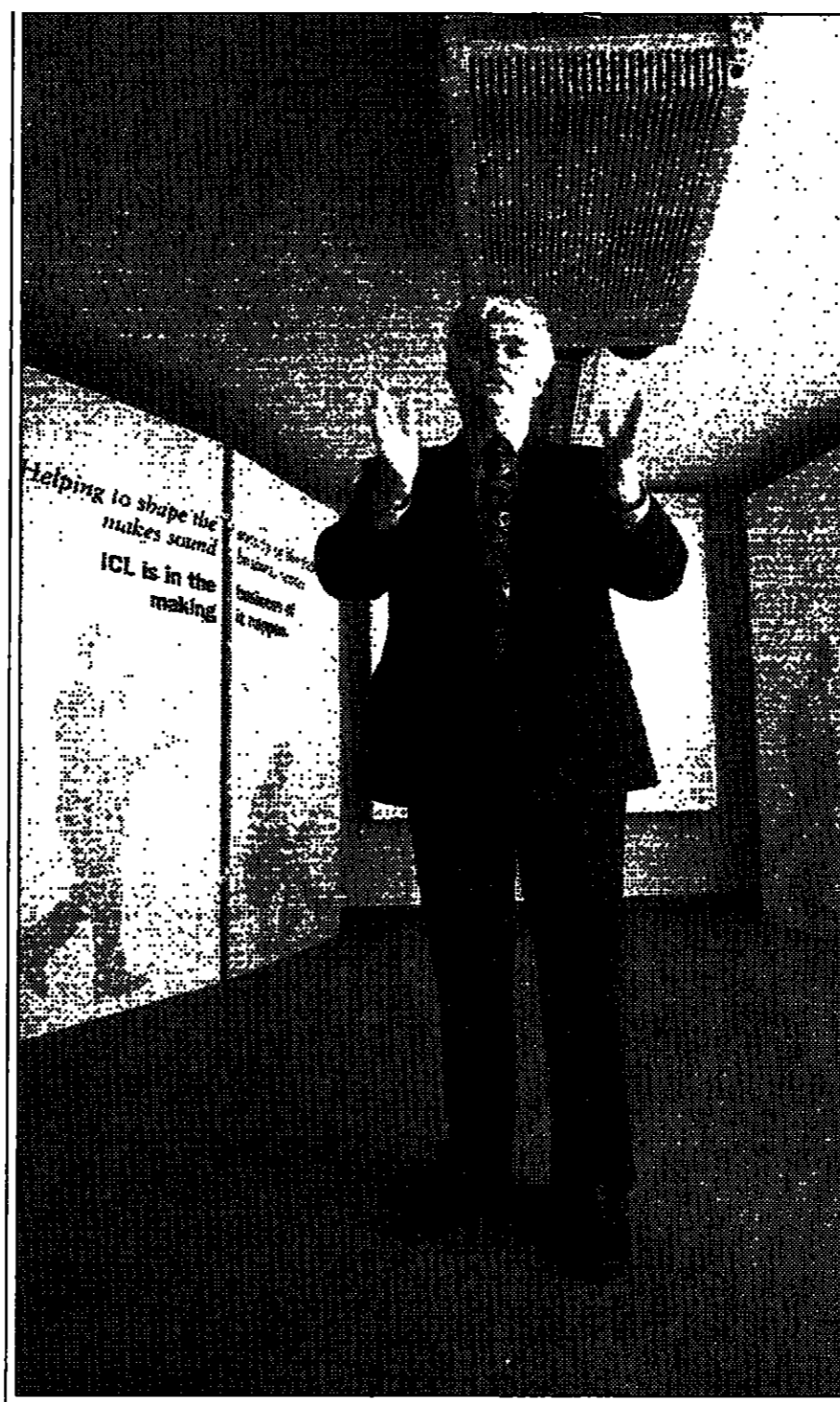
GRANADA yesterday clinched the first major sale of assets it acquired with January's £3.9 billion takeover of Forte, agreeing to sell 60 White Hart hotels to Regal, the fast-expanding provincial hotelier.

of negotiations, but I am delighted that we have been able to complete this acquisition. Meanwhile, Marriott International reiterated yesterday its interest in buying the French hotel chain Meridien from Granada, along with some of the old Forte Exclusive hotels.

No run out for Thomas the Tank Engine as Reed abandons sell-off

Mark Miller

THOMAS the Tank Engine, Winnie the Pooh, even Babar the Elephant have been left on the shelf. Reed-Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, announced yesterday that it had abandoned attempts, at least for the time being, to sell off its consumer publishing business, Reed Consumer Books, because it could not get the price it wanted.



Watershed ahead... ICL chief Keith Todd is eyeing Internet

Cost of cutting jobs means 1,000 more could go at ICL

Ian King

ICL, the British-based computer group owned by Japan's Fujitsu, announced yesterday a shake-up of its businesses which could cost up to 1,000 jobs this year.

from easy" but insisted that the five-point programme would mark a "watershed" in the company's fortunes. The plan is being part-funded by a £200 million rights issue underwritten by Fujitsu, an 80 per cent shareholder, which will also help to strengthen ICL's debt-laden balance sheet.

contract electronics manufacturing business. ICL is also being spun off as ICL's volume products division, which is to link with existing Fujitsu activities, creating a new worldwide personal computer business.

SFO warning as seven men convicted of £5m swindle

Dan Atkinson

SEVEN men have been convicted of a £5 million "long-firm" fraud whose victims included companies in Germany and Holland. The Serious Fraud Office warned that others planning this type of swindle, in which a company builds up a solid credit record then decamps with goods or money - should "take note" that five of the convicted have been jailed.

the creditors to whistle for their money. The disbanding obtained goods, said the SFO, were fished out on to the black market via a secret warehouse in Liverpool, where they were often repackaged and re-labelled to disguise their origins.

Halifax drops Warburg from conversion team

Tony May

HALIFAX Building Society has dropped SWC Warburg from the team advising on its conversion to a bank and stock market flotation next summer.

today, would value the Halifax at about £10 billion. An industry source said there had been three or four changes at the top of the management team at Warburg in recent months and, at times, Halifax had not been certain who was heading their team.

role of lead broker during the conversion and flotation, and Halifax is considering who to appoint as joint broker. Halifax stressed that the split had nothing to do with the technical side of the operation for which there was praise, and said Warburg will continue to be employed on projects not connected with the conversion and flotation.

Warburg has been working with Halifax since early 1994, firstly on the merger with the Leeds and then with the conversion and flotation. A Warburg spokesman said the group was "disappointed by this, but we wish Halifax every success with their flotation."

Ford's £2.6bn investment safeguards 13,000 jobs

Chris Barrie

UP TO 13,000 jobs will be safeguarded by a £2.6 billion investment planned by Ford for its UK car plants and development centres. The investment, much of it earmarked for the Halewood plant on Merseyside and the Dagenham factory in Essex, emerged yesterday in the wake of General Motors' announcement earlier this week that it may invest \$1 billion in its Vauxhall car plants at Luton in Bedfordshire and Ellesmere Port in Cheshire.

The neighbouring engine plant will also be upgraded to make more variations. Ford said that £1 billion of investment under its six-year plan had already been announced for engines at Bridgend, south Wales, and Dagenham. Some of the spend would also be earmarked for Jaguar.

But the news has reassured the 5,000 workers at Halewood about Ford's intention to keep the plant open. Since Christmas, the factory has been operating well below its full capacity of 1,100 cars a day due to flat domestic demand. The site, which also makes gearboxes, is making 800 cars a day.

Table with 4 columns: Country, Rate, Country, Rate. Includes Australia 1.84, Austria 15.30, Belgium 45.00, Canada 2.04, Cyprus 0.70, Denmark 8.50, Finland 6.97, France 7.48, Germany 2.0000, Greece 366.00, Hong Kong 11.62, Italy 2.340, Malta 0.5425, Netherlands 2.4700, New Zealand 2.23, Norway 9.60, Portugal 228.50, Saudi Arabia 5.70, Singapore 2.12, South Africa 5.83, Spain 184.00, Sweden 10.25, Switzerland 1.77, Turkey 88.57, USA 1.4925.

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel)

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Hong Kong: Enter the Dragon



New modes... shopping streets in Shenzhen reflect buying power as well as tastes of its relatively affluent work force
PHOTOGRAPH DON MCPHEE

Mainland boom zone fears its industrial revolution may be over. PATRICK DONOVAN reports

'One night city' pays the price of success

IT IS just before 6am at Kowloon station and the queues are already building up for the first trains to Shenzhen. They may live in Hong Kong, but these hundreds of predominantly white-collar commuters work in mainland China; a journey which takes less than an hour through the rolling hills of the New Territories to passport control at Lo Wan.

More than 150,000 Hong Kong nationals earn their living in the Shenzhen region, one of China's five special economic zones set up to help industrialise the country nearly 16 years ago.

Because of the growth of trade links between Hong Kong and the south of China, Shenzhen has, in effect, become the colony's cut-price manufacturing base for companies such as Citibank, Siemens and Hitachi. Lexus and Mercedes cars are parked around the fledgling stock exchange. In an independent broker's office, "special investor" services are laid out for the well-heeled, complete with

a private sitting room and personal dealing terminal.

As with any emerging economy, Shenzhen has its share of poverty and corruption. Convicted fraudsters were among 16 people shot in a mass execution last month. The region's relative wealth has brought a sharp rise in illegal immigration. The population has risen from 30,000 to about 3.8 million over the past 10 years and residency is tightly controlled by police permit.

The losers in the Shenzhen economic experiment cluster around the Shangri-la hotel: groups of tiny barefooted children who lock on to westerners with pitiable appeals for spare change.

But the wealth seems to be trickling down. According to China Daily, Shenzhen residents enjoy the country's highest average monthly salary, HK\$3,441 (\$286) — nearly 50 per cent more than in Beijing.

The development of Shenzhen has played a fundamental role in the transformation of Hong Kong's economy. The

colony used to employ more than 70 per cent of its workforce in manufacturing. But relocating these activities to China has allowed Hong Kong entrepreneurs access to cheaper land and labour costs.

Mainland manual workers earn about £1 per day, around one-third of rates in Hong Kong. In the process, says Victor Fung, who heads the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the colony has been able to concentrate on higher-

margin service industries, particularly within the financial sector. These now account for about 80 per cent of the colony's jobs, says Mr Fung.

"We [in Hong Kong] are the driving force for the development of the Pearl river area [which includes Shenzhen]. As many as 50,000 Hong Kong-owned companies straddle the region. So closely tied economically are Hong Kong and this part of South China that around 90 per cent of all ex-

ports from the Guangdong province pass through the colony."

As Li Zing Sen, the director of Shenzhen's Foreign Investment Office, says: "It is a symbiotic relationship. After 1997, this relationship will remain and the hinterland will continue to develop itself." He says that the Shenzhen has been nicknamed "one night city" because of its spectacular fast construction rate.

Zhaung Xinyi, general manager of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, adds: "The return of Hong Kong is a very active factor for the development of Shenzhen."

But Shenzhen risks becoming a victim of its own success. As its labour and land prices rise, Hong Kong investors are moving into ever more remote rural areas in search of cheaper land and labour. Warnings about the slowdown emerged last year when the mayor, Li Zibin, announced

that the zone's industrial growth during the first four months of 1996 had, for the first time, slipped behind the national average.

As its economy evolves, Shenzhen is attempting to develop its own financial base. Does it plan to compete head-on with Hong Kong over the longer term? The People's Bank of China in Shenzhen, regional arm of the country's all-powerful central bank, plays this down, insisting

there is scope for "co-operation". Steps are being taken, for example, to link financial settlement systems in Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

Li Zhong Wei, the bank's deputy director in Shenzhen, says the zone's future lies in becoming a provincial financial centre for China. It has already had success in attracting western financial institutions to help service international joint-venture projects.

Mr Li wants to expand the banking sector, however, by launching an initiative to open the region to smaller and medium-sized banks.

Shenzhen has already had some success with its six-year-old stock exchange. About 135 Chinese companies are listed. Hong Kong-based brokerages such as Crosby, Standard Chartered, Flemings and Nomura take it seriously enough to maintain representative offices.

For all its expansion plans, Shenzhen seems destined to remain a manufacturing satellite to Hong Kong — even after unification.



Manufacturers face long march north in eternal pursuit of cheap labour

YK SO, chairman of electronics firm A V Concept, went to China early. Sixteen years ago, the Hong Kong businessman set up a plant in Guangdong region which now employs 500 production staff and up to 50 engineers, writes Simon Beavis.

"Most manufacturers have moved because you have to be competitive," he says. "It doesn't matter if

you are a small or a medium manufacturer, you have to go to China."

Hong Kong has seen nearly 70 per cent of its manufacturers transfer operations across the border, chasing cheaper labour and space, and lured by tax allowances and long leases from the Chinese authorities.

Mr So expects to pay a quarter of Hong Kong rates

for engineers and one-tenth for his mostly female manual staff.

For toy makers, 90 per cent of production has shifted to China. But Edmund Young, head of Edelkita, which employs 7,000 at two southern China sites, says the main reason he and his competitors went north was because of labour shortages in the mid-1970s. He admits the benefits of

paying about a quarter of Hong Kong rates, but says these must be supplemented by the cost of providing dormitories and other welfare arrangements.

For Mr So, the problems are emerging. While the supply of labour is plentiful, training needs to start from basics.

"About 90 per cent of the workers are from villages

and agricultural families, most have quite low education and they don't have any knowledge of electronics manufacturing."

Already in Shenzhen the authorities are getting choosier about the incentives they offer manufacturers. Fifty-year lease agreements are not on offer any more. "Manufacturing is being pushed further and further north," says Mr So.

Pace slows in great shopping parade

From street stall to glitzy mall, retailers complain they have got more than they bargained for. ROGER COWE reports

SHOPAHOLICS seeking diversion therapy should come to Hong Kong. It is not the place for those who think there are too many department stores on Oxford Street or can think of no worse fate than spending a day at Gateshead's Metro Centre or one of Britain's other regional shopping centres.

In fact, Hong Kong is a kind of regional shopping centre for Asia, attracting tourists from several countries, including Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

Shopping is virtually the national sport, and there is certainly no shortage of opportunities to pursue it, whether in traditional street markets or the glitziest malls.

There are 24 main shopping centres on Hong Kong island, while the tourist trap of Kowloon, across the waterway on the mainland, has almost been taken over by the retail trade. Just one mall, the four-storey Pacific Place, under the

was the first time since the 1970s that sales volumes had fallen across the retail front.

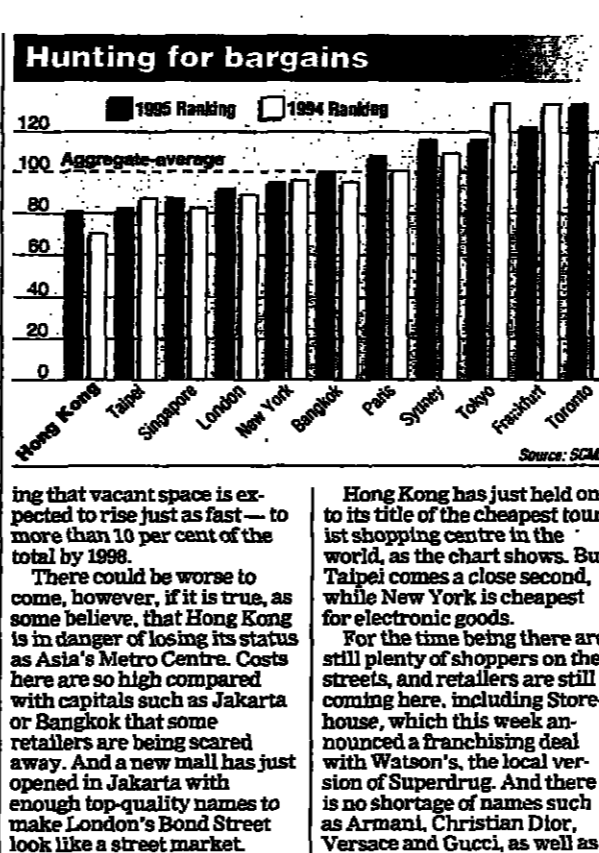
"Everybody, even supermarkets and fast-food outlets, felt the decline," he says. That is worse than the tough years of 1985 and 1989, when it was mainly the luxury items which stayed on the shelves.

"It's been a double whammy for retailers. After being used to 8 to 10 per cent growth, we have seen a fall of about 1.5 per cent in 1995. At the same time, because of the previous boom, rents have hit a ridiculous peak," Mr Miles says.

He looks forward to the new airport bringing in more visitors, but the downside is that space over the rail stations linking the airport with the centre has been sold to developers to help pay for the project. This will almost certainly mean even more shopping centres.

Mr Miles sees a silver lining in the fact that rents have stabilised and are now unlikely to rise for a few years. But that is bad news for the developers, who are busy putting up new space which was planned before the slump. By 1998 there will be one-third more space than there was 10 years previously.

It is, therefore, not surpris-



Perils of unstable property

SIMON BEAVIS on the real estate crash some analysts say may depress market for a decade

PASSERS-BY had a right to be confused. For 10 years the prestigious Victoria development kept changing. First it was an office block, then a hotel, then it became offices again.

Hong Kong has learnt to react quickly to its volatile property sector. For this is a place dangerously dependent on the vagaries of real estate.

The government, keen to promote a low-tax economy, depends for huge amounts of revenue on land sales to developers. It helps, therefore, that it is the sole land owner and can keep prices high by organising monthly public auctions for most of the property.

The fortune of nearly every Hong Kong tycoon, from Li Ka Shing down, is founded on property. Some 70 per cent of the asset values on the stock exchange are tied up in property, with 60 per cent of quoted companies having significant property interests.

The banks are up to their eyes in the property market, heavily committed to lending to developers and to other companies against the security of property.

But Hong Kong has learnt the perils of the market too. A

speculative bubble which saw prices double in the three years to mid-1994 led to a dramatic crash and an associated stock market fall. Prices and rents are now down by up to 30 per cent and hungry developers are being warned by forecasters that it could be 10 years before they claw their way back to the peak.

Behind the most recent crisis was speculation on so-called strata-title commercial properties. Here, developments were sold by the floor or even the room, allowing individual small investors to take a punt on property.

Speculators were able to sell their interests up to 18 months before completion on no more than a 10 per cent down payment. Some blocks changed hands eight times before reaching the final buyer.

Prices spiralled up from an average of HK\$45,467 (£3,500) per square metre in 1991 to HK\$104,566 in 1994 and rents shot up by 25 per cent. Great

for speculators, but so alarming for foreign companies that some moved to other centres.

In June 1994 the government acted. It forbade forward selling until six months before completion, and then based only on 100 per cent down payments. The property market crashed, taking the overheated stock market with it.

The boom led massive oversupply. Vacancy rates are forecast to peak at a 14-year high in 1997 and there is a growing recognition that there are potentially serious instabilities in the market which could damage Hong Kong's economy at a time when prosperity is its best hope of continuity in uncertain times.

Nicholas Brooke of chartered surveyors Brooke Hillier Parker, said: "If we were to face a collapse like Tokyo's, banks would be vulnerable and so would property companies, many of whom bought at the peak."

The optimists like to believe that next summer a wave of Chinese companies will flood in and soak up the excess. The more cautious see little reason to believe Chinese businesses will be any more prepared to pay through the nose than anyone else.

Girobank

Girobank announces that with effect from close of business on 8 March 1996 its Base Rate was reduced from 6.25% to 6.00% per annum.

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St Michael takes wing at last, but oven-ready meals are ditched

WHAT is the point of selling oven-ready meals if three-quarters of the population don't have ovens?

It took Marks & Spencer a few years to realise that while these dishes were big sellers in the UK, they were not suited to Hong Kong.

The result was to stop selling them. Frozen food sections at its eight stores in the territory have also been phased out, because shipping items from London was a headache.

More emphasis has also been given to Asian clothes sizes, although all the products are taken from the UK range.

Prices on 90 per cent of the range have been held at 1992 levels. And an aggressive marketing campaign was launched to promote "outstanding value for money". The aim was to attract younger, more fashionable customers. As a result, M&S is now prosper-

ing after an early struggle to achieve sufficient volumes. Its sales here are now among the highest in the group, with a profit margin of 18 per cent.

Paul Smith, regional director, said this had been achieved despite rents which he said were the highest in the world.

In the last full-year results, M&S Hong Kong (or Ma Za in the Chinese characters) reported profits of nearly £13 million on sales of £71 million, an increase in both figures of about a quarter.

The group started with one store eight years ago and has a target of 14. Mr Smith said all the stores were smaller than he would like: at no more than 20,000 square feet they are around a quarter of a typical city centre UK store. He is looking for a site of 40,000 square feet or even more, but it is not easy to find at the right price.

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Finance Guardian

Horse racing and casinos will still be the twin passions in the territory after 1997.

PATRICK DONOVAN joins the punters at Hong Kong's Happy Valley track while **RICHARD THOMAS** moves among the gaming tables in offshore Macau

HAPPY VALLEY PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHEE

MAJOR General Guy Watkins, a former commander of Britain's artillery forces, makes a very odd bedfellow for Stanley Ho — a 74-year-old entrepreneur who is possibly the richest industrialist in the Pacific Rim. But they are the two most powerful men in one of the world's biggest gambling industries.



Hong Kong: Enter the Dragon

Mr Ho is less forthcoming about his own finances. Commanding the power of a latter-day feudal baron in his home town of Macau, he first built up the franchise in the early sixties. But Mr Ho, who has the glassy stare of a man not to be trifled with, concedes that the tax receipts from his betting operations amount to half the Macau's administration's entire income. Others estimate the total gambling take to be in the region of \$500 million.

By contrast, Mr Ho is a 74-year-old plutocrat, a refugee from the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong who worked his way up to become the uncrowned "King of Macau". He owns the world's highest-rolling casino empire. Through his Shun Tak group of companies, he employs more than one in five people in the Portuguese colony and wields the power of a latter-day feudal overlord.

As he watches Mr Vitality storm home to win Sha Tin's Triple Crown, the major general sketches out a Western perspective of the attraction of Hong Kong gambling. Such is the importance of gaming income to the colony, he says, that it effectively underwrites the social security system.



A win double

as such because they take such trouble to beat the odds." Major General Watkins makes a convincing point. Sha Tin, with its lush lawns and views over the rolling mountains of the New Territories, may be the venue for the showpiece races. But the real buzz comes from the midweek fixtures at Happy Valley, an oval swathe of green, shoe-horned between the skyscrapers of downtown Hong Kong Island.

And, as the major general says, the majority of the tens of thousands of office workers are clearly not here for a social night out. Few of the mostly smartly-dressed punters are drinking. As we wait for the start of Wednesday's Stock Exchange Stakes, there is silence, with most race-goers hunched over one of Hong Kong's dozen daily racing pages.

Stanley Ho puts it more succinctly. "Gambling," he says, "is in the Chinese blood" — at least here in Hong Kong and Macau. But Mr Ho, whose honours range from the Portuguese title of Commander of

the Order of Benefaction to patronage of the HK Girl Guide Association, insists that he actively discourages locals from gambling if they cannot afford it. On occasions he has even intervened if he feels somebody has over-stretched their budget.

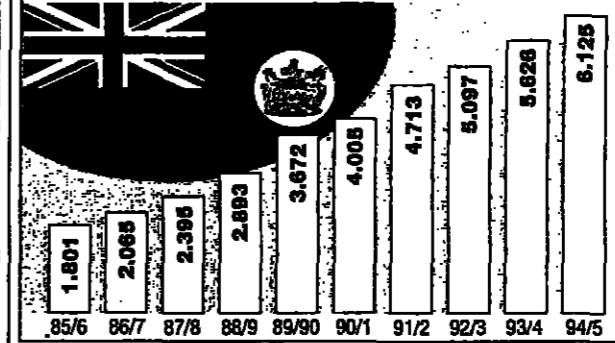
Other prominent locals such as David Tang, the suave owner of the Shanghai Tang retail chain and close friend of the Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family, would go further. He says that the Chinese have a special affinity with gambling because "we are all refugees.

When you are a refugee you put your life on the line" Mr Tang has no patience with the faint-hearted when it comes to the clink of dice on green baize. With his hall-mark Cuban cigar in hand, Mr Tang declares that anybody grinning over a small loss "is a cockroach". The proper definition of a gambler is anybody who "puts up more than they can afford". He says that when he gambled regularly, he used to use Feng Shui to decide how to place his stakes.

Mr Tang, who helms his English public school and university education by wearing traditional Chinese clothing, claims that he used to look out for rans on the street because they are regarded as lucky. "That is the view from the upper echelons of Hong Kong society. For many, gambling will remain a passion whatever happens after 1997. Illegal gaming continues to

Hong Kong betting

Betting turnover in £bn



be a problem for the Hong Kong Police. The attraction is that underworld bookmakers can offer better odds because they are not paying government taxes. The most common cases uncovered by the research unit of the Organised Crime and Triad Bureau are high-stakes games of mahjong. But the forces reckon that new games are springing up all the time. Recent cases have involved dominoes, Thai-style baccarat, and dog and cricket fighting.

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Game of the name

20
Nicholas Bannister

HARSH things are done to the English language in the name of commerce. The latest trend, prevalent among technology companies, is to run two words together but retain both capital letters. Only a few, such as SmithKline Beecham and Nynex CableCom are in the top ranks. But numbers will swell in a few years after mergers and the rapid growth of hi-tech companies like CompuServe, the soon-to-be floated US on-line services business.

There is a breed of agency and design firm which preys on susceptible company directors. For a fat fee they will organise a new name, logo, stationery or an advertising campaign.

Some companies have resisted and high street chains still bearing the names of founding families include W H Smith, Marks

& Spencer and J Sainsbury. Even Boots retains the memory of Jesse Boot, who founded Boots Cash Chemists in the 1800s.

In the industrial field, however, founding fathers have been brushed aside in the name of progress. Guest Keen and Nettlefold, an industrial giant founded by Quaker families, is now GKN, while Turner and Newall, stained by the scandal of health-damaging asbestos, is now known more anonymously as T&N.

The switch to initials has also wiped away the names of companies known by their early activities. Tube Investments, the engineering group once affectionately known in the stock market as Tubes, switched to TI Group, and then proceeded to tack 'I' ahead of its big consumer brand names, such as TI Creds and TI Russell Hobbs.

The board of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, one of the longest company names, has resisted the temptation to switch to P&O — although that is the way it is commonly known. But British Oxygen Corporation has become the faceless BOC Group. Richard Glordano, once BOC's chief, is now chairman of the disaster-prone British Gas, which will be seeking new

names when it splits into two companies. No doubt the image makers are suggesting burying the past under names such as Brit-Gas or GasCo.

London and Rhodesian Mining and Land Company drew a veil over its origins and activities in Africa, and emerged under the formidable "Tiny" Rowland as Lonrho, a name where even the clue to its Rhodesian past is lost to generations familiar only with Zimbabwe.

Into the initials pot have gone such names as Trustee Savings Bank, Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, British American Tobacco, Metropolitan Estate and Property Corporation, London and Scottish Marine Oil, and Rio-Tinto Zinc which recently took over Australia's CRA. Try saying: "I work for RTZ by phone CRA."

Then there are strange concoctions. Industrial and Commercial Finance Corporation, a specialist investment group, changed to the very succinct Investors in Industry but is now known as 3i. The fad for misspellings, the bane of English teachers, created mobile phone operator Vodafone, tyre-fitters Kwik-Fit, and budget supermarket chain, Kwik Save.

You can be sure new tech companies will keep an old fad alive.

Quick Crossword No. 8069

Across
1 Finger guard (7)
8 Moon man's goal in rhyme (7)
9 Poisonous type of acid (7)
10 Try (7)
11 System of belief (5)
13 Artificial language (9)
15 SE Asian country (9)
18 It is eaten or drunk (5)
21 Exercise with arm lifting (5-2)
22 Bible story (7)
23 Furtiveness (7)
24 Fuel container (3,4)

Down
1 Theme (5)
2 Acoustom (5)
3 Crazy (with fury or grief) (6,7)
4 Pitch tents (6)
5 Abnormal (13)
6 He sought a heart in Oz (3,3)

7 Bertie Wooster's greeting (4-2)
12 Check (horse) (4)
14 Throw (coin) (4)
15 Enforce (6)
16 Type of fuel (6)
17 Greek poetess (5)
19 The middle light (5)
20 Measure of heat (5)

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